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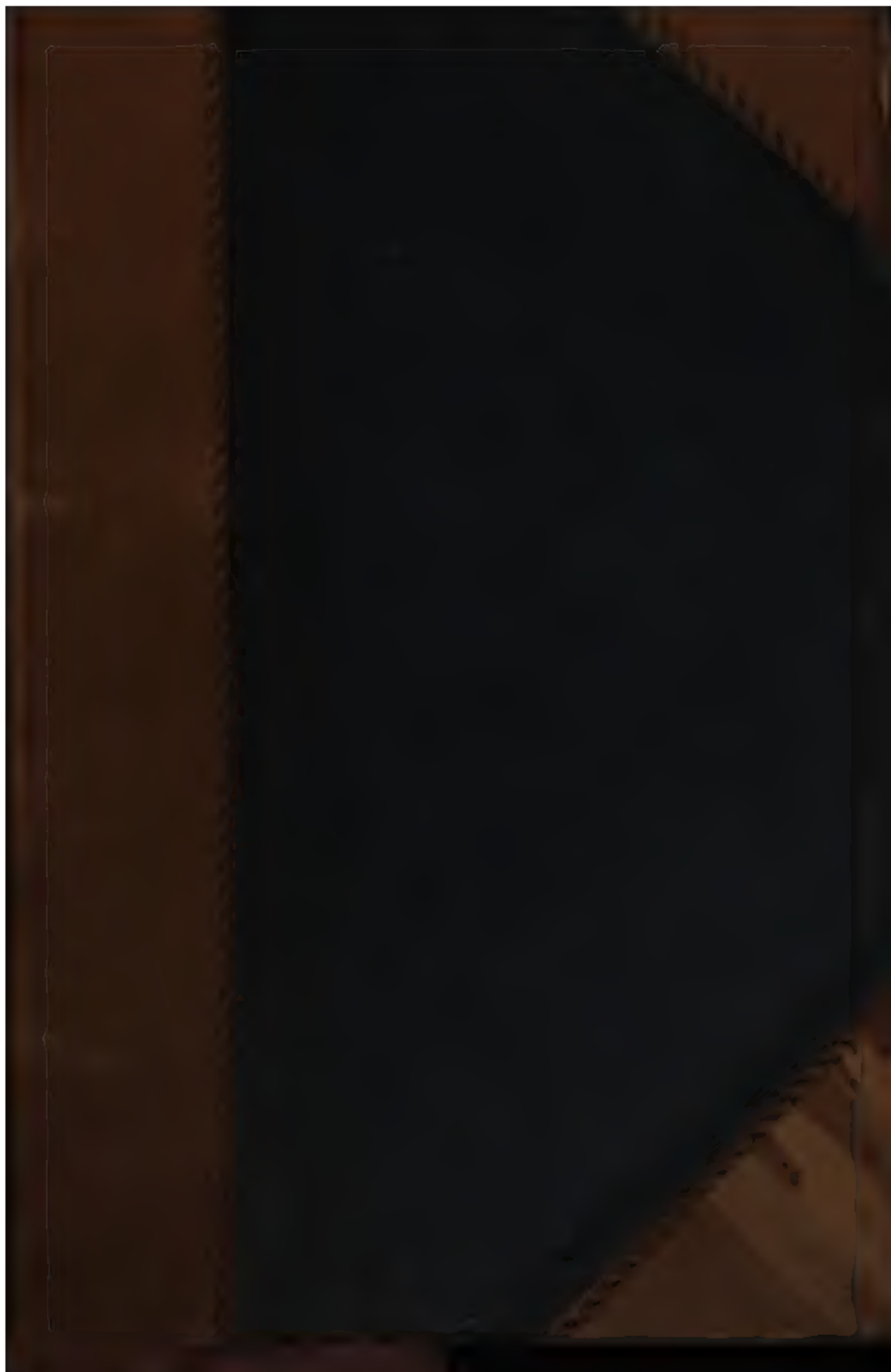
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663.



DIARY OF A NUN.

VOL. I.

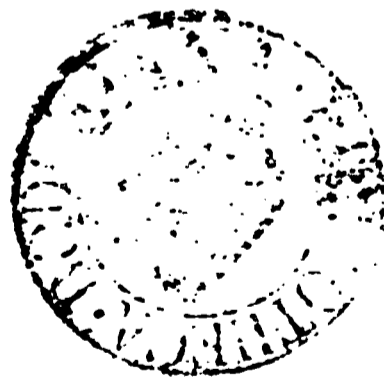
DIARY OF A NUN.

"Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love."

• SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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DIARY OF A NUN.

CHAPTER I.

“ I know not why
I love this youth, and I have heard you say
Love reasons without reason.—CYMBELINE.”

“ SAY no more about it, I entreat you, dearest mama ; my resolution is unalterably fixed.”

“ May you never live to repent it, my dear child ! But oh, Edith ! you will not do me justice—you will not believe that in all I have said to you on this subject I have been influenced solely by the fondest and tenderest affection, and that, though it might gratify my maternal pride to see

you married to such a man as Lord Annandale, yet I can in all sincerity assure you that his rank and wealth are the last things to which I look to secure your happiness ; it is to his high principles, amiable disposition, and upright mind that I feel I might confidently entrust my beloved child.”

“ But, mama, has not Arthur as noble a disposition as any man breathing ? What has Lord Annandale to recommend him that Arthur does not possess, except a paltry coronet, and a larger quantity of base metal ?”

“ I know, my love, that to attempt to reason with you on this point would be utterly futile. You have made up your mind that Arthur De Vere is perfection itself, and that nothing but prejudice could make me discover a single fault in him !”

“Nay, dear mama, I am not quite so unreasonable as you imagine ; I allow that he has faults, but I love him all the better for them. Indeed there is nothing I should more dread than the finding myself chained for life to a masterpiece of perfection ; it would be a constant thorn in my side—a magnifying glass for my own deficiencies. So you see I am quite willing to concede that poor Arthur has no pretensions to infallibility.”

“Indeed, Edith, I should be the very last person to deny that he possesses many good qualities. He has what the world calls a generous disposition ; but at the same time he is rash, impetuous, easily irritated, and——”

“And just as easily appeased. Indeed, mama, you are too severe upon him ; if his feelings are ardent and easily excited, is he not always ready to acknow-

ledge his faults ? and is he not miserable when he thinks he has given pain to another ? And then, is he not constancy itself ? and should not I be the most ungrateful of mortals were I ever to dream of any one else ? It is now nearly two years since he went abroad, and during all that time he has most honourably and scrupulously adhered to his promise of never attempting to correspond with me, and yet I feel as sure of his unaltered affection as if we had parted but yesterday.”

“ Well, my love, you must take your own way, I suppose. Perhaps the day may come when you will remember my words with regret, and wish, when it is too late, that you had listened to your mother’s warning voice. God bless you, my own precious girl ; now go to bed, for it is very late, and rest in peace, for I will

do as you desire, and will tell Lord Annandale that he must not bestow another thought upon you.”

“Dearest, kindest mama ! do not think me ungrateful for all your goodness, though I cannot consent to marry a man I could never love, even to please you.”

Lady Fitzgerald kissed her daughter affectionately, and they parted for the night,—the one, to fill six pages of foreign letter paper with important and interesting intelligence, for the benefit of her confidential friend, Gertrude Aylmer, then travelling on the Continent,—the other, to devise and indite the most polite note imaginable to Lord Annandale, expressing her deep regret for “the waywardness of her spoiled child, whose affectionate heart shrinks from the bare idea of leaving her home ;” but at the same

time gently and delicately insinuating that Edith was too young and too inexperienced to understand her own heart, and that time might do much to improve her.

Time, thou wonder-worker, we owe thee much of good, but how much of evil also! Thou canst cancel the vows of hearts that would erst have shrunk from the very breath of inconstancy—thou canst cast a deadly chill upon the warm affections of the young and ardent—thou canst transform the generous, simple-minded girl into a cold-hearted, calculating woman of the world, and make her cast away the once cherished object of her youthful attachment for a sexagenarian peer, or a gouty millionaire!

CHAPTER II.

“Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes.”—OTHELLO.

“Oh qu'il arrive d'étranges choses dans les voyages, et
qu'il serait bien plus sage de rester chez soi !”—VOLTAIRE.

GERTRUDE AYLMER TO EDITH FITZGERALD.

“Leone Bianco, Venice.

“CONGRATULATE me, dearest Edith, on the achievement of one of the most romantic adventures that ever embellished the diary of a modern traveller,—an event which one is rarely privileged to enjoy in these days of universal improvement, when the roads are so pro-

vokingly good, and the police so tiresomely vigilant, that a broken spring or a brigand is scarcely ever permitted to enliven the tedious monotony of a journey.

“ We left Inspruck on Monday, and commenced our passage across the Brenner. Though we had been complaining of the heat but a day or two before, in the valley, yet we found the cold so intense upon the mountains that we were almost petrified, in spite of fur cloaks and every other warm device that English luxury could suggest. At last I took to walking up the hills, which not only proved a most effectual remedy for the cold, but also enabled me to enjoy the splendid Alpine scenery through which we passed, far better than I could otherwise have done. The road being covered with snow and ice, our horses progressed but

slowly, and I have sometimes found myself so far in advance of the carriage that after waiting a considerable time for its reappearance, I have begun to fancy I must have missed my way, and taken a wrong path. In one of these solitary rambles I was tempted, by the extreme loveliness of the scenery, to wander a few yards from the road, to the edge of a tremendous precipice, on whose rugged sides a few firs and birch were nodding beneath the weight of their snowy plumage, while in the ravine beneath a mountain torrent was roaring and foaming over its rocky bed. Little did I think, luckless wight that I was, how soon I should be roaring too ; for while rapt in contemplation of the beauties of the ravine, I chanced to become better acquainted with them than I exactly wished or intended, and losing my foot-

ing in the snow, I slipped over the edge of the precipice, and rolled down to certain destruction, as I then supposed. At anyrate, I was so dreadfully frightened that I can give no accurate account of what befell me, except that I caught hold of a shrub, or something that providentially arrested my downward progress, and screamed for help with all the vehemence of despair. But all in vain; the torrent mocked my feeble efforts, and I began to give myself up for lost; not one human being had I encountered for miles past, amid that wild and desolate scene. My arm ached so painfully with grasping the tree which supported the weight of my whole body that I thought I could hold on no longer, and must soon resign myself to my fate. A deadly faintness and dizziness came over me when I looked down into the terrible

depth below, and beheld the dreadful death that awaited me. Oh Edith, I can never forget the horrors of that moment, and though my giddy and volatile disposition may lead me to think lightly of the danger now that it is past, yet I trust the feelings of that awful moment may never be entirely obliterated from my mind. Imagine, if you can, the delight with which I at length heard a voice respond to my cries, bidding me hold on a few minutes longer, and I should be safe.

“And saved I was, though by what means I cannot tell; for I have not the slightest recollection of anything that passed, from that moment, till I found myself lying on a bed in a miserable chalêt, with poor Clara and her abigail assiduously engaged in saturating me with sal volatile and eau de Cologne.

“ I believe they had thought I was dead, and so great was their joy on seeing me come to life again, that I could hardly get any compassion for the aches and bruises from which I was suffering. My ankle, too, was so severely sprained that I could not set foot to the ground. However, no sooner had they ascertained that I was really alive, than they put me into the carriage, and hurried me off to Capo di Ponte, where Clara knew that we should find better accommodation than at the wretched little inn at Venas, where we then were.

“ Despite my pains and groans, curiosity prevailed so far as to make me extremely anxious to know by what means I had been saved; and great indeed was my vexation when I discovered that Clara had not even taken the trouble to ask the name of my preserver; all she

could tell me was that she believed he was an Englishman, but that her fears and anxiety for me so completely engrossed her, that she had not a thought to bestow upon him ; and that, in fact, finding he could be of no further use, he disappeared as soon as he had seen me carefully deposited on a couch in the inn at Venas.

“ From Victoire, however, I ascertained ‘ qu’il était fort beau, ce jeune Anglais, et qu’il avait l’air très distingué.’

“ Now Victoire, you must know, is an excellent judge in these matters ; she can discriminate to a nicety between l’air gentil and l’air distingué, and can decide at a coup-d’œil, from the curl of the whiskers, whether a man be an habitué of the Tuileries, or a frequenter of the Palais Royal. She descanted con amore upon the ‘ beaux yeux noir ’ and other per-

fections of my unknown hero ; and great indeed is my mortification at having no clue by which I can hope to discover a person to whom I am so deeply indebted. Mr. Temple, who would have shewn more sense than his wife in this business, had most unfortunately preceded us on my little Arabian, to Capo di Ponte, to get our rooms ready for us, according to his usual custom ; so that unless the fates are peculiarly propitious to my wishes, and bring about a meeting in some almost miraculous way, I shall never have the gratification of seeing the man to whom I owe my life. Doubtless my gratitude for his services is in nowise diminished by hearing so much of his prepossessing appearance ; and I sometimes wonder whether I should feel equally anxious to have an opportunity of thanking him, if I knew him to be both old and ugly !

Chi sa ? I leave it to your excellent discrimination, my dearest Edith, to decide this difficult question for

“ Your affectionate friend,

“ GERTRUDE AYLMER.”

Gertrude Aylmer was, as has been already said, the intimate friend of Edith Fitzgerald ; but their friendship was rather the result of early association than of congeniality of disposition ; for never were two more opposite characters united by bonds of long cherished and unre-served intimacy.

Edith was the only child of a widowed mother,—a mother who idolized her—whose very existence was bound up in hers, and whose sole object in life was to make her happy. She had been blessed by nature with a most affectionate, ingenuous, and confiding disposition.—Blest !

Can it indeed be deemed a blessing? For, oh, what happiness can such dispositions hope to find in this cold world?—what but disappointment and misery can await them? Fond hopes blighted—young high spirits broken—ardent affections chilled and trampled on! Is not this the lot of all the brightest and fairest upon earth,—of all who have a heart to waste upon its hardness?

Edith was one of those to whose very existence sympathy and tenderness are necessary; life would be to her but a living death without

“Something to love, to lean upon, to clasp
Affection’s tendrils round.”

At the early age of fifteen, she had centered upon Arthur De Vere the rich store of her young heart’s warm affections. And was he worthy of

such a gift? Could he give her in return a love as devoted, as pure, as unselfish? Not a shadow of such doubts ever crossed the bright sunshine of Edith's mind. They had been friends from childhood. Arthur had always called her his little wife;—he had always been, as a boy, remarkably repulsive and ungracious towards other girls, and most particularly kind and gentle towards her. Add to this, that he was singularly prepossessing in person; and when he wished to please, there was a charm, a fascination in his manner, which few could resist.

What wonder, then, if Edith's girlish fancy were captivated? What wonder, if, upon this pleasing foundation, she erected a superstructure of brilliant imaginations, with which sober reality had little to do; and enshrined within the

temple of her inmost heart the ideal object of her fond idolatry, invested with every perfection that could render him worthy of her adoration !

CHAPTER III.

“ Rich, noble, but an orphan ; left, an only
Child, to the care of guardians good and kind.
But still her aspect had an air so lonely !—
Blood is not water, and where shall we find
Feelings of youth like those which o’erthrown lie
By death, when we are left, alas ! behind
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb.”

BYRON.

GERTRUDE AYLMER was an orphan and an heiress,—two of the greatest misfortunes which can possibly befall a woman. Her father was a man of independent fortune, and a younger branch of an ancient and noble family. Her mother was a young and lovely Roman,

whose exquisite beauty so captivated Mr. Aylmer's too susceptible heart during his first tour on the Continent, that, overlooking all disparity of circumstances, he carried her home to England as his bride. All his friends were highly incensed at this unlooked-for alliance, more especially as they had already provided him with wives presumptive—"most eligible and desirable connexions"—from their own family circles. But the fair stranger was not long destined to prove an obstacle to their benevolent views, or to suffer long herself from the blighting effects of English coldness, whether of heart or climate. She died shortly after giving birth to a daughter, leaving Mr. Aylmer a widower at four-and-twenty, to begin life anew, but far too deeply afflicted by his loss to be capable of enjoying his recovered freedom.

His only consolation was found in the budding charms of his little Gertrude, and to her he determined faithfully and conscientiously to devote the remainder of his days. Alas, for her ! those days were few and brief ! Ere she had attained her thirteenth year, she was left a lonely orphan in the wide world, “ with none to bless her, none whom she could bless.”

She was sent by her guardian (a distant relation, whom she had never seen) to a fashionable school in London, there to remain till her education was completed, or, in common parlance, till she was finished : a most comprehensive term indeed, when one considers all that it is meant to include of arts and sciences, belles lettres and worsted work, morals and entrechâts ; from trigonometry and conic sections, to painting butterflies and perpetrating bravuras — from Dugald

Stewart on the Mind, to D'Egville on the toe !

Poor Gertrude was thus thrown completely upon the kindness of strangers, for the happiness of her early years. Fortunately for her, she had not one of those timid, retiring dispositions which require the utmost tenderness and gentleness from all around ; she possessed a mind far beyond her years—a strength and firmness of character which gave her a certain degree of confidence in her own powers, and a soundness of judgment which rendered her far less dependent upon those amongst whom she might be thrown than she would otherwise have been.

But she had not been long at school before she found a kind and valuable friend, in the Italian teacher, or “ La Signora,” as she was universally called

by all the members of Miss Seymour's establishment. This lady, who was a Roman by birth, and had been educated in the convent of the Sacre Cœur, naturally took a warm interest in Gertrude, on finding that she too was half a Roman, and that she inherited from her mother, besides her fine dark eyes and jetty hair, a large portion of the ardent nature and enthusiastic temperament which animates the children of the south.

Gertrude, on her part, soon conceived a strong affection for the warm-hearted Italian, who took her under her especial protection, and with whom she gladly spent every moment that could be snatched from school-hours, in talking of Italy, the golden land of her young dreams, the paradise in which all her airy castles were built. With all the energy of her character, she devoted herself heart and soul

to the study of that most melodious language, and many were the hours stolen from sleep, when at the first faint dawn of light she would take her favourite Tasso or Metastasio from beneath her pillow, and pore over their fascinating pages, till the unwelcome sound of the six o'clock bell summoned her, and the fair slumberers around her, to prepare for the less interesting avocations of the school-room.

Rapid indeed was the progress she made in all her studies, for she was endowed with talents and powers of no ordinary kind; but to speak Italian like *La Signora* was her first and fondest dream of ambition, and one which she very soon realized. All the little savings of her pocket-money were carefully hoarded up, to be bestowed upon her mother's poor countrymen, as she called

the Italian image-sellers and wandering minstrels, whom she encountered in her daily promenades round Portman Square ; and not unfrequently did she incur a reprimand for the impropriety of her conduct, in lingering a moment to regale her ear with the sweet sounds of “ *il cielo la rendi il merito,*” or “ *la santa Madre di Dio la benedica,*” which richly rewarded her for any self-denial the gift might have cost her.

Year after year glided on almost imperceptibly, in the monotonous but not uninteresting routine of school-room avocations, and when at the age of eighteen Gertrude’s guardian proposed removing her from under Miss Seymour’s care, she entreated to be allowed to remain another year, for the sake of her beloved Signora’s society.

She had been spending the summer

vacation at Oakley Park, with the friend and playfellow of her childhood, Edith Fitzgerald, who was just two years younger than herself. Edith had been educated hitherto entirely by her fond and anxious mother, who fearful of imposing any unnecessary restraint, or calling forth any exertion that might injure her delicate health, had erred rather on the side of indulgence, and was now not a little mortified to find how far superior Gertrude was to her friend, in all the solid acquirements, as well as the showy accomplishments, which are deemed essential to every young lady's education.

It was therefore without much difficulty that Gertrude succeeded in persuading Lady Fitzgerald to let Edith accompany her on her return to school ; and Edith herself, much as she wept and grieved at parting from her mother, was

soon reconciled to her fate by the idea of having Gertrude for her constant companion, besides the delightful prospect of new acquirements which opened upon her youthful ambition, in which German and Italian, singing and the guitar, blended in sweet confusion.

“What would Arthur say if I were to play and sing like Gertrude? How delighted and surprised he would be!”

Such were Edith's thoughts, while, rapt in admiration, she listened to the rich tones of her friend's melodious voice, warbling forth one of those delicious strains with which Bellini has enchanted the world.

Edith remained at school one year, and exerted herself very successfully to repair the deficiencies of her education. She looked up to Gertrude as the model by which she was to perfect herself, but not

one spark of envy ever mingled with the profound and devoted admiration with which she regarded her.

Gertrude, on her side, loved the gentle and confiding Edith with the affectionate tenderness of an elder sister, and by a thousand little nameless kindnesses and attentions strove to make her forget as much as possible that she was no longer at home.

There is nothing like the uncalculating, unselfish fervour of youthful affection. We may form friendships in after life, perhaps more discreetly and with sounder judgment, but the golden link is wanting that binds the heart to childhood's happy days—the remembrance of early joys and sorrows shared together—the thousand memories of the past, awakening a sympathetic chord in each bosom—the undoubting trust and guileless confidence

of an unpractised heart ;—aye, these all combine to make the earliest friend the dearest ; and though the storms and tempests of after years may sweep direfully o'er the soul, and make fearful havoc there, they can never wholly efface the once-loved image there enshrined, in all the ardour and purity of early friendship.

Having now completed her nineteenth year, Gertrude's education was supposed to be finished, and she was accordingly removed from school, and introduced by her guardian to the best society that——shire afforded, preparatory to making her debût in the great world of London in the ensuing spring.

Edith, who could not endure the thought of remaining at school when Gertrude was no longer there to cheer and assist her, entreated her mother to allow her to return home, and was soon

joyfully reinstated in her pretty little boudoir at Oakley, surrounded by her pet flowers, dogs, and birds, while she, the beloved of all, the idolized of her mother, dispensed sunshine and smiles around her ; and but for one deep, tender chord within, half joy, half sadness,—a chord which one master-touch alone could awaken, but which once awakened could never cease to thrill,—were it not for this long-cherished feeling, known only to her inmost heart, and scarce acknowledged there, she would never have dreamed of aught of happiness beyond the woods that skirted her own fair domain.

But a mother's eye is keen and penetrating—a mother's heart is tender and sympathetic ; and while Edith fancied her feelings were concealed in her own bosom, her mother had discovered them even

before she was herself fully aware of their existence, and had continued to watch their growth with the deepest anxiety.

Arthur De Vere, the young heir of Beechwood, with a handsome fortune and unincumbered estate, was a match to which few mothers would have felt disposed to object; but Lady Fitzgerald, who had known him from a boy, and had closely studied his temper and character, was convinced that his was not the disposition most calculated to secure the happiness of her darling child; and deeply did she regret, when it was too late to repair the error, that she had allowed a childish intimacy to ripen imperceptibly into a strong and ardent attachment.

CHAPTER IV.

“ There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall,
And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
With tongues all loudness and with eyes all mirth.”

LARA.

“ Some to dance, some to make bonfires,—each man to
what sport and revels his mind leads him.”—OTHELLO.

THE old halls of Beechwood re-echo to the sounds of mirth and revelry—the village bells pour forth a merry peal—the poor are feasting on the lawn, and all around speaks of joy and gladness. It is the birthday of the young heir of the ancient house of De Vere, who has now attained his majority, and is welcomed

with enthusiastic delight to the seat of his ancestors.

Many guests were assembled within those hospitable walls ; and the magnificent banquet which had been provided for them was succeeded by music and dancing, till the superior attractions of Hengler and her fireworks dispersed the dancers and drew them out upon the lawn. Each was intent upon himself and his own peculiar gratification ; the ladies were a little afraid of the evening dews, —the elder ones for their feet, the young ones for their curls,—but the night was so clear and lovely that these ladylike fears were soon forgotten, and every one seemed perfectly pleased—so much so, indeed, that nobody even noticed the absence of the master of the fête, though for the space of a whole hour he was invisible to the eyes of all but one.

There is a mossy walk at Beechwood, upon the margin of the Leama's clear and limpid stream, half overgrown with the clustering branches of the rhododendron and seringa, which fall in untrained luxuriance across the path. Here and there a shower of gum cistus' leaves lie white as the driven snow upon the turf, and the woodbine flings her fragrant blossoms in graceful festoons from spray to spray, clothing the rugged branches of many a venerable tree "with richer beauties than its own."

It is a lovely spot—so calm, so peaceful, so safe from intrusive footsteps! The nightingales delight in it; for here their favourite lilac blooms in unrestrained profusion, and here they may pour forth their sweet melody, undisturbed by one discordant murmur. But on this eventful evening they were not the sole occupants

of the dingle walk ; other forms were mirrored in the Leama's glassy wave—other voices, scarcely less sweet, blended not inharmoniously with their own.

“ How soothing is this perfect stillness, after all the turmoil and gaieties of the day ! ” whispered Edith—“ how delightful to turn from the glare of those brilliant fireworks to the soft light of this lovely moon ! The one is like the pleasures of the world, dazzling and exciting for a time, but soon wearying and palling the unsatisfied heart ; the other resembles the calm, quiet happiness of domestic life, which shines not one moment to leave the next in a deeper gloom, but sheds a clear, mellow light around, making all things beautiful with its own soft beauty.”

“ Why, Edith, you are become quite a grave moralist,” replied Arthur. “ But

I am so glad you like this walk, for it is such a favourite of mine. I shall love it better than ever now."

"Had we not better think of returning towards the house? Mama will wonder what is become of me."

"Dearest Edith, why such haste? Stay one moment, I entreat you. Why have you avoided me so carefully ever since you returned from school? I have never been able to speak one word to you. I hope, amongst all the rest of your learning, you have not learned to forget your old friends. I flattered myself once Edith," he added, in a softer tone, "that you had some little regard for me. I did venture to hope that—that I was not wholly indifferent to you; and that thought has been my dearest and fondest hope during the long long year that has passed since we parted in your little flower

garden at Oakley. Do you remember your last gift—these violets? I have worn them next my heart ever since—they are dearer far to me than aught on earth beside—except the giver.”

Edith burst into tears; her long repressed feelings overpowered her, and she sobbed convulsively. Arthur clasped her fervently to his heart, and softly whispered, “My own precious Edith, I ask no more.”

Oh that such moments should ever pass away, and give place to the cold realities of life! One brief gleam of rapture so pure and perfect is not too dearly earned by long years of sorrow and suffering; but the aching void, the dreary wilderness that too often succeeds, embittered tenfold by the remembrance of that which has been, but can be no more; this, this is torture to the lonely heart—

this is grief which can be forgotten only in the grave. Happy, oh, happier far are they who hold on their solitary path through life, unloving and unloved! What though no bright dream of ecstasy shed a momentary halo around them?—they are not doomed to “awake, and find the vision flown;” it is not theirs to mourn over the tomb of blighted hopes and crushed affections. They have never plucked the rose, and cannot feel the rankling thorn.

CHAPTER V.

“ There was awe in the homage which she drew ;
Her spirit seemed as seated on a throne,
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength :—most strange in one so young.”

BYRON.

Two years have passed away—Gertrude is now twenty-one, and undisputed mistress of her fortune and herself. Her first step was to settle an annuity upon her Italian friend, sufficient to enable her to attain the summit of her ambition—a cell in the convent of the Sacre Cœur ; no one being admitted as a member of that community who does

not possess a trifling independence. Having thus endeavoured to secure the happiness of one for whom she was so deeply interested, and having seen her overwhelmed with gratitude and delight on the eve of departure for Rome, her next object was to gratify her own long-cherished and ardent desire of visiting the land of her mother, the Italy of her young dreams.

Her guardian was one of those good old English gentlemen whose liberal minds can conceive the existence of nought but evil beyond the boundary line of the British Channel, and as long as he possessed any authority over his ward, he resolved that no entreaties of hers, however urgent and persevering, should induce him to let her leave her own country even for a day. “If the girl chooses, when she is of age, to go

wandering all over Europe in search of her mother's be-whiskered and half-starved popish relations, why, I cannot help it; but I hope before that time to see her well married and settled in her own country."

Such were this worthy gentleman's private meditations; but like many other conscientious guardians, he was doomed to see his wishes frustrated; nay, he was even obliged to give his consent, (wisely making a virtue of necessity,) when Gertrude informed him, the very day after she came of age, that her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Temple, were soon to set out upon a continental tour, and that she hoped he had no objection to her accompanying them.

In truth, few people, in bidding farewell for a time to their native land, could leave behind them less to regret than

Gertrude. Two seasons in town, under the successful chaperonage of her guardian's sister, Lady C——, had shewn her the utter emptiness and vanity of what the world calls pleasure, and she turned from it wearied and unsatisfied. Her peculiarly Italian style of beauty, and extraordinary musical powers, caused her to be admired and courted, caressed and flattered, wherever she went; but the homage that was paid her she received coldly and proudly, as her due, and appeared to derive from it neither pleasure nor gratification—

“She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
As seeking not to know it.”

Her spirit dwelt apart in a region of its own creation, feasting on fancy's ever-varying stores, and seeking a charm, amid the wearisomeness of this workday world,

in the hidden treasures of its own bright imaginings.

There were few, very few, for whom she cared to exert her powers of pleasing; but this very indifference to the good opinion of the multitude only gave her an additional charm in the estimation of those whose friendship she really valued. Her wit and vivacity rendered her at times the life and soul of the party—the star of the evening. At another time, silent and abstracted, she would appear scarcely conscious of what was passing around her.

Some kind friend hinted that she was in love. She laughed scornfully at the idea, and her dark eye flashed as she exclaimed, “I do not believe there breathes upon this earth the man who could win my love,—false, frivolous, selfish beings that they are, without a heart

to give in return, how dare they hope to win one !”

Her friendship for Edith was true and ardent as ever, and she even proved its sincerity at the risk of her own life. Edith, who was spending a few weeks with her at Braybrooke Abbey, her guardian's residence in ——shire, was suddenly seized with a malignant fever of a most dangerous description. Gertrude wrote immediately to inform Lady Fitzgerald of her daughter's danger, and never did she leave the bedside of the sufferer till her mother arrived to share with her the perilous office she had so nobly fulfilled. Perhaps Gertrude's firmness of mind and unflinching courage tended not a little to preserve her from the probable effects of her hazardous task—she escaped the contagion, and was more than rewarded for all she had

undergone, by the tears of gratitude with which Edith thanked her for her generous self-devotion.

But where was Arthur De Vere while his heart's best treasure lay stretched upon a bed of sickness ; nay, even upon the very brink of the grave ? He was wandering in distant lands, an exile from all he loved best on earth ; and well was it for him that he dreamed not of his Edith's danger—for to think that she was dying and that he could not fly to her—that he might hear no more the gentle sound of her sweet voice, nor gaze on that soft expressive eye,—to think that she loved him fondly, devotedly, and yet that he was banished from her presence at such a moment,—oh, that thought were madness !

And why wandered he thus, a lonely exile in foreign lands ? It was Edith's

mother who commanded his absence—she it was who had driven him from his home ! But blame her not. The happiness of her only child was at stake, and could she then hesitate to demand the sacrifice, harsh and cruel as it might appear ? She felt deeply convinced that they were not calculated to make each other happy. Edith's gentle and yielding disposition required the greatest tenderness and consideration ; an unkind word, an angry glance, would suffice to make her miserable ; she had not the firmness and decision of character which would fit her to be the wife of De Vere ; and though she had won his youthful love, she might fail to secure the respect and esteem of his maturer judgment.

Such were Lady Fitzgerald's reasons for insisting upon a total separation for two years, during which time no communi-

cation was to be kept up, even by letter. Both parties were to consider themselves perfectly free, and all that had passed between them was to be as if it had never been. At the expiration of that period, Arthur would be three-and-twenty, and Edith just nineteen, and should they then still prefer each other to all the world beside, Lady Fitzgerald promised that she would no longer oppose their union.

De Vere's proud spirit was deeply wounded by this rejection of his suit ; and often did he vow, in all the bitterness of disappointed hope, to think no more of Edith, and to prove his indifference by seeking another for his bride. But his first love was not so lightly to be forgotten ; he could not choose but be faithful to her ; for full well he knew that nothing but death could efface his memory from her heart.

To remain in England was impossible. He had pledged his word of honour never to attempt to see or write to her ; and to be constantly near her under these restrictions would have been too severe a trial. He therefore resolved to pass these two tedious years on the Continent, where he would at least have a constant change of scene to divert his thoughts, and where he would not be reminded at every step of her whom he might not see.

As for Edith, not a doubt of her Arthur's constancy ever disturbed her mind ; and though for a time she wept and pined over his absence, yet the gaieties of a London spring, in which she was now for the first time initiated, combined with the incessant assiduities and devoted tenderness of her mother, soon contributed to restore her spirits to their wonted animation, and she enjoyed not

the present moment the less, that she looked forward to the future with the eager confidence of youthful hope—a hope whose brightness was yet all undimmed by the dark clouds of disappointment.

CHAPTER VI.

“ 'Tis sweet to hear
At midnight, on the blue and moonlit deep,
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellowed, o'er the waters sweep.”

BYRON.

GERTRUDE was now on her way towards Italy, with her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Temple,—having left nothing to regret in her native land but the society of her beloved Edith. For this loss she contrived in some degree to make amends, by a weekly dispatch of no inconsiderable magnitude. The most important of these epistles, giving an account of her adven-

ture among the Tyrolese Alps, has already been transcribed. The eager curiosity she therein expresses to become acquainted with the person to whom she was indebted for her preservation, was destined to be much sooner gratified than she had any reason to expect ;—as will be seen from the following letter :—

GERTRUDE AYLMER TO EDITH FITZGERALD.

Venice.

“ I have seen him, my dearest Edith ; I have actually seen my unknown preserver, and thanked him in person for his exertions in my behalf. And who do you think he turns out to be, but your devoted knight-errant, Arthur De Vere,—so adieu at once to all my gay visions of a hero at my feet ! Still it is some compensation to have some one to whom I may talk of you ; one in whom I can take an interest

for your sake. But can you forgive me, if I venture frankly to tell you that I am disappointed in him, and that I cannot help fancying those highly - finished sketches of his various perfections with which your letters to me used to be filled, were drawn rather from imagination than from sober reality.

“ Now, do not tear up my letter and trample it under your feet, but have a little patience with the whims and caprices of an old friend. I allow that he is strikingly handsome, and that his eyes are fascinating as a basilisk's, though at the same time I must candidly confess that their expression does not please me. There is a degree of hauteur in his manner, a freezing and repulsive reserve, that quite chills me. Though longing to speak of you, I really had not the courage to mention

your name, so great is the awe with which your terrible lover has inspired me at the very first coup-d'œil. I hope the next time we meet we shall be on better terms ; and, at any rate, if I do not succeed in thawing him, he will be the first of his species upon whom I shall have tried my melting powers in vain.

“We are so delighted with Venice that we mean to spend two or three weeks here ; and Mr. Temple talks of fitting up a stall for Khaled in Lord Byron's deserted stables on the Lido,—which would complete the charms of this place ; want of exercise being the only drawback to its enjoyment. As for myself, I am scarcely yet recovered from my sprain, and the gondola is to me a state of perfect beatitude. I was conveyed in one to-day to the Manfrini Palace, where there is a splendid collection of pictures ; and there

it was that I had the supreme felicity of meeting Mr. De Vere. He recognised me immediately, and made many polite inquiries after ‘my broken bones and bruises.’ I felt so strangely confused and awkward when I thought of the disagreeable predicament in which he had first found me, that all my customary stock of modest assurance vanished, and I am afraid he must have thought me a sad graceless creature. Luckily, however, Mr. Temple came up to my assistance, and great indeed was my surprise on hearing him exclaim, ‘Why, De Vere, is that you? I had no idea you were in this part of the world!’

“And now, dearest Edith, I may as well come to a conclusion; for though strongly disposed to inflict upon you a rhapsody on fair Venice, ‘ocean’s peerless queen,’ yet common-sense suggests that having

already touched upon a theme that will awaken a thousand thoughts in your heart of hearts, and give you enough to dream of by night and feed upon by day for full three weeks to come, it would be folly to waste my eloquence upon you at the present moment ; so, wishing you joy of your meditations, I will make my best bow and retire.”

* * * *

Days and weeks glided on, and still our travellers remained at Venice, devoting their mornings to churches and galleries, their afternoons to the breezy Lido, and their evenings to promenades in the Piazza di San Marco, where a very fine band of Hungarians performed Strauss's delicious waltzes or some of the choicest morceaux of the Opera.

During this time, Gertrude and Arthur were thrown much together, and seemed

to take great pleasure in each other's society. As Gertrude gradually recovered from the effects of her fall, she began to grow weary of the indolent repose of the gondola, and was delighted to mount once more her favourite Khaled, and to pace up and down the smooth, firm sands of the Lido, with De Vere by her side, his hand on the reins, to restrain the impatient curvetings of her spirited little steed.

It was not in Gertrude's nature to be diffident and reserved, more especially towards one with whom, for Edith's sake, she was anxious to become well-acquainted. The chilling hauteur of his manner at their first interview only rendered him the more piquant in her eyes ; and she determined, *à tout hazard*, to penetrate the icy barrier behind which he had entrenched himself, — nothing

doubting but that she would be amply rewarded for her perseverance, as the richest gems lie buried deepest in the earth, and cost the miner most trouble to obtain.

She was successful, as all women are when thoroughly determined to be so. They soon held unreserved intercourse on all topics save one—the one nearest and dearest to the hearts of both,—and yet, as if by mutual consent, the only one to be avoided.

There is a delicacy, a sensitiveness in the first true love of a young and ardent heart, which shrinks from exposure to the cold gaze of an indifferent eye, as from profanation. It is a sacred treasure, stored up in the inmost recesses of the heart, to be brooded over and feasted on in secret—in hours of lonely musings—in the still and silent night—and, above all,

beneath the kindling light of a Venetian moon.

So Arthur felt ; and though neither an unguarded word, nor a look of abstraction, ever betrayed the state of his heart to Gertrude's penetrating eye, yet his solitary wanderings night after night on Lido's deserted shore, and the gentle splash of the oar, as with noiseless speed his gondola glided o'er the dark waters of the Lagunes in the stillness of the midnight hour—aye, these might tell a tale to curious ears, which he would fain have left untold—

“ For why should gentle hearts and true,
Bare to the rude world's withering view
Their treasure of delight ? ”

But De Vere must have been more than mortal could he have remained insensible to the fascination of Gertrude's society, or steeled his heart against her

powers of charming. He could not but feel flattered and gratified by the preference she evinced for him ; and the constant and familiar intercourse that subsisted between them rendered reserve on a point of such absorbing interest difficult, if not impossible.

At length Gertrude availed herself so adroitly of the softening influence of a lovely moonlight night, on which she and Arthur chanced to be separated from their party amid the crowd that thronged the Piazza, that she actually ventured to speak of Edith ; and Arthur, before he was aware, found himself entangled in a tête-à-tête conversation, upon the very subject he had always most cautiously avoided. In spite of all his habitual coldness and reserve, he could not long resist the affectionate ardour and enthusiasm with which Gertrude spoke of his darling

Edith ; and when he recollected all he had heard of the generous self-devotion with which she had watched by the sick-bed of her friend, regardless of her own danger, his heart warmed towards her, and he felt that for Edith's sake he owed her no common gratitude.

The friendship thus begun on Edith's account was afterwards pursued on their own. They soon discovered in each other a wonderful congeniality of taste and disposition, and Arthur, whose opinion of the powers of the fair sex had never been very exalted, was no less astonished than delighted on finding one who, while she possessed talents of the highest order, had the good sense never to display them unnecessarily.

But a peep into Gertrude's diary will be the best means of making us au fait at the *dessous des cartes*, as young ladies

generally tell the truth when they think no one is likely to be the wiser for it :—

“ *Venice*, October 4.—I have broken the ice at last, and have been richly rewarded for my courage, by one hour’s delightful conversation about dear Edith. Oh, what a relief it was to my heart to pour forth its long-repressed feelings—to speak of her whom I love best on earth, to one who loves her perhaps still better! I think I now begin to understand Mr. De Vere, and to see through that repulsive mask of reserve and hauteur with which he tries to conceal all his thoughts and feelings from the vulgar eye. If I am not greatly mistaken, a volcano burns beneath the snow.”

“ October 10.—Mr. Temple talks seriously of leaving Venice immediately, and going on to Florence, lest the cold weather should set in, and find us on the

wrong side of the Appenines. I must in conscience bow to the justice of this decree, though I cannot bear the thoughts of tearing myself away from this lovely spot, where the five happiest weeks of my life have been spent. Happy days! oh, too happy! for I shall feel doubly wretched when they are past and gone, and nothing but the remembrance of them remains, to embitter still more the sadness of my lonely lot.

‘Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice, nella miseria.’

Surely, friendship is indeed Heaven’s best gift to woman—a cordial to sweeten her cup of sorrow—a star to lighten her darksome path!

“Dear Edith, the fond and gentle companion of my childhood, and the kind Signora who loved me for her country’s sake; these were the only friends I had

ever possessed till within the last few weeks—the only beings who had ever shared a single thought of mine, or sympathized in any of my feelings. But, oh, how imperfect was such sympathy! how unsatisfying such friendship compared with that I have now been privileged to enjoy! Who can tell the value of a kindred heart, but those who, like me, have long thirsted for one in vain? It is so delightful, so animating to find one's every thought and feeling fully entered into and reciprocated—to have a congenial companion in every pursuit, a sharer in every pleasure. I was excited almost beyond myself last night in the gondola; I felt inspired with new powers, new energies, while singing to my guitar, beneath the soft beams of a Venetian moon, that exquisite barcarolle of Pepoli's, 'Voli, voli la Bar-

chetta ;' and afterwards at Arthur's earnest request, his favourite ' Addio, Teresa.' He is passionately fond of music, and feels it sometimes almost too acutely. I saw the tears glistening in his deep blue eye, and he turned away to hide his emotion. Does *he* regret that we are so soon to part? Oh, no ; he is going to claim his beautiful bride—he is going to realize the bright dreams of long, long years, and to receive the reward of his constancy. I shall soon be forgotten in the midst of so much happiness, or remembered only as one who helped to wile away the tedious hours of exile by talking to him of his Edith. Well, I may still be permitted to think of him, aye, and to love him too, for Edith's sake."

"October 13.—The last day at Venice.—Arthur accompanies us to Florence, from

whence he will set off on his journey homewards, by way of Leghorn and Marseilles ; and thus in a few days my brief dream of happiness will have vanished, and leave no trace behind. Dear, lovely Venice, how can I bear to bid thee farewell ? Would that I might die here, and be buried beneath the green turf of the Lido, with that bright sun to shine on me by day, and that glorious golden moon by night ! I have wandered this evening for the last time on the shores of the Adriatic, and have taken one long, lingering look at the last sunset I shall ever see there.

“ Arthur seemed to enter into the sadness of my feelings ; though, alas ! I could not expect him to share them. We neither of us uttered a word ; my heart was overflowing, and I dared not trust myself to speak. At length we turned slowly and

sorrowfully away from the dear Lido, and re-entered our gondola. I felt at that moment that I could willingly have given up all the world to be imprisoned on this island for the rest of my life. Oh ! why does this cruel presentiment haunt my fancy with a sad foreboding, that I shall never see it again ? But, perhaps it is best that it should be so—better far than to return here, after a lapse of long and weary years, with my feelings chilled and deadened, my susceptibility of enjoyment gone. Never, never, can this last sunset scene be effaced from my remembrance. The sky and sea were bathed in one rich flood of burning crimson, against which the dark outline of the Rhetian Alps stood out in strong relief, while the domes and towers of Venice were suffused in a halo of rosy light.

“As this gradually faded away, the moon

rose from the bosom of the waters, not pale and cold as in the north, but brilliant and golden as the sun, making night clear as day.

“ Oh, how surpassingly lovely ! My heart clings to Venice as its home—as my first resting-place in the land of my mother. And yet I must leave it to-morrow,—leave it without a hope of ever seeing it again !

“ Farewell ; and yet once more, farewell. I would fain linger on the word, as if the repetition could detain me here ; —but no—I have had my last, last look ; to-morrow’s setting sun will find me far away.”

CHAPTER VII.

“There is a tomb in Arquà;—reared in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover : here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius.”—CHILDE HAROLD.

“*Padua*, October 15.—Spent the day in lionizing, but with little enjoyment or profit on my part. My thoughts were far away on the blue waves of the Adriatic, and I sighed for the calm repose of the gondola, while rumbling and jolting in a rickety vehicle over the paved streets of Padua.

“What tourist is it who says, ‘Add dirt to dulness, and to that an air little

superior to what is breathed by a cat in an air-pump, and you will have an adequate idea of Padua'? A sad contrast, indeed, to the sparkling waters and balmy breezes we have left behind.

“ We first visited the university, which contains sixteen hundred students ; but as this is holiday time there was little to see, and we wandered through a long suite of deserted corridors and empty halls. The Pappafava palace, which is, I believe, very little known to travellers, contains, in my humble opinion, the greatest curiosity in Padua—a group of the fallen, or rather falling angels,

‘ Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition.’

“ It consists of sixty figures, all in different attitudes, cut out of one solid block of marble.”

“*Arquà*, October 17.—This day has been devoted to Petrarch, and never did a more admiring worshipper bend before the shrine of that great poet. Leaving the Ferrara road about a mile from Moncelice, we turned off abruptly to the right, and crossed a steep and awkward bridge over a canal.

“Our route then lay through richly wooded meadows, bordered with willows, poplars, and festoons of vine, till we came to a small lake, whose blue and unfathomable* waters glittered in the morning sun, while the vines dipped their brilliant red leaves, like coral branches, into its limpid wave.

“We then began to ascend; and after winding about among the hills for some

* After a walk of twenty minutes across a flat, well-wooded meadow, you come to a little blue lake, clear but fathomless.—*Notes on Childe Harold, Canto 4th.*

time, we came suddenly upon the romantic little church and village of Arquà, beautifully situated at the foot of the Euganian mountains, in a snug cleft, where it is sheltered from every wind, and warmed by the southern sun.

“ My first impulse was to rush towards the church-yard, where, in a sarcophagus of red marble, raised on pillars high above the common tombs around, repose the remains of the immortal bard. Yes, there they repose ; but, alas ! not always in peace ; for a sacrilegious hand has dared to disturb the sacred stillness of the grave, and to break open the tomb in hopes of carrying off, as a relic, at least some crumbling memorial of departed genius. Poor Petrarch ! doomed even after death to seek in vain a safe retreat—‘ un tranquillo porto, alla sua lunga e torbida tempesta.’

“ However, I am thankful to say the attempt proved unsuccessful; though a fissure in the granite still remains, to shew to what a height of atrocity this relic-hunting mania can lead.

“ The four laurels mentioned in one of the notes to Childe Harold no longer exist, if indeed they ever did grow there. A solitary cypress is the only shrub within the precincts of the little cemetery. Arthur gathered a few branches from it, and twisted them into a wreath, which he presented to me. I received the mournful emblem with a smile, which belied the gloomy forebodings of my heart. There is something in this ill-omened gift which weighs heavily upon my mind. It is the only memento of our friendship which will remain to me a few days hence. He will fly on the wings of love, to entwine a wreath of orange-blossoms

in the sunny ringlets of his fair bride ; but the dark funereal cypress alone is a fitting coronet to encircle my throbbing brow.

“ I think he must have perceived the effect which his sombre chaplet produced on my wayward fancy ; for he afterwards gathered some roses from the poet’s garden, and entwining them with the cypress, he said, ‘ There, now ; this wreath is a perfect emblem of yourself,—a strange compound of smiles and tears.’

“ I was taking a sketch of Petrarch’s cottage for him, at his particular request, and I hastily scribbled underneath it the following lines, as a souvenir of his emblematic gift :—

‘ Yes, weave the dark cypress for me,
It was formed for a brow sad as mine ;
Yet still the sweet rose-bud of hope
With my sorrowful wreath I’ll entwine.’

“On leaving the cemetery, we proceeded to climb up a steep, winding path, till we reached the poet’s house, which is beautifully situated on the declivity of a hill, sloping down towards the south, and basking in the meridian sunshine, which the freshness of an autumnal morning taught us how to appreciate.

“Petrarch’s delicious retreat is surrounded by a small garden, well stocked with jessamine in full bloom, which completely scented the air with its fragrant perfume. The pale and delicate China rose mingled with the glowing fruit of the pomegranate; but all seemed to mourn the absence of that fostering hand which had once sustained and pruned their now neglected and tangled branches. There, too, I saw the poet’s room—

‘La cameretta che già foste un porto
Alle gravi tempeste sue diurne.’

“Ivy and jessamine were wreathed in wild luxuriance round the window, and a few graceful sprays had crept even into the room, as if in search of him who had once delighted to inhale their sweetness, now wasted on the passing stranger. In the sitting-room, we saw the inkstand which Petrarch had always used. It is a small bronze tripod, of a very classical form.”

“*Ferrara*, Oct. 18.—This may truly be called the land of poetry. Our journey is literally a pilgrimage from one hallowed shrine of genius to another. We turn from Petrarch’s tomb to Tasso’s dungeon, and from the autograph of Guarini to the chair of Ariosto.

“Ferrara gives one the idea of a deserted city ; the grass grows thickly in the streets ; many of the most magnificent palaces present long lines of closed

shutters and broken windows, and fragments of marble cornices lie scattered on the ground :—

‘ There seems as ’twere a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este.’

“ If Tasso’s gentle spirit could now behold the fallen glories of his tyrant’s throne, he would indeed feel amply avenged for all his wrongs.

“ The greater part of the population of the city seems to consist of soldiers, to judge from the immense number of them we met in the streets. Of these, two thousand are foreign troops, Austrian and Swiss, to keep the inhabitants in due subjection to the mitre and the eagle.

“ In the public library, we saw the tomb of Ariosto, which was placed there by General Miollis, in 1801, when the church of the Benedictines, where it originally

stood, was converted into a dépôt for warlike stores by the French. Here we also saw Ariosto's chair and inkstand, (twin - brother to Petrarch's,) besides divers manuscripts of Tasso and Guarini, and the original copy of 'La Gerusalemme,' with Tasso's annotations and corrections. His handwriting is large and free, and far more legible than that of most Italians of the present day, whether poets or prozers.

“ Our next visit was to the house of Ariosto, or Areosta, as it is written over the door. The room in which he died has been purchased by the government, and his bust, by Canova, is placed in it. Some of my relic-hunting countrymen have cut away pieces of wood from the door of this room. I longed to commit the same theft, but was restrained by certain compunctious prickings of conscience, which

gently hinted that I must sacrifice the pleasure of abusing others if equally guilty myself; so I was obliged to rest contented with no better souvenir than a rose from the garden in which he spent the greater part of his time, and where he composed his immortal Orlando. We then bent our steps towards the hospital of St. Anna, where, in a small dark cell below the ground-floor, Tasso was confined seven years by Alfonso d'Este, that 'generous and magnanimous' patron to whom he dedicated his incomparable 'Jerusalem.'

“He was imprisoned ‘per aver dato un bacio a Leonora,’ as the custode was pleased to inform me; but, for my part, I do not believe he ever ventured so far, —oh, no; I believe he worshipped the noble lady with that deep and pure devotion with which one gazes on some bright

far-distant star ; I believe that he esteemed it an honour almost too great to be permitted to kiss the ground on which her foot had rested, and to immortalize her name in his undying verse :—

‘Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipped at holy distance.’

“It made me shudder to enter the dismal, chilling dungeon where that brilliant spirit was suffered to pine away in gloom and solitude,—‘infermo più di tristezza che delirio,’—as the simple inscription over the door so touchingly records :—

‘Long years!—It tries the thrilling frame to bear,
And eagle spirit of a child of song,
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong,
Imputed madness, prison’d solitude ;
And the mind’s canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart.’

“On our way back to the hotel, we passed beneath the walls of the Ducal

Palace, where the unhappy Hugo and Parisina were beheaded. I wished much to see 'the frightful dungeon at the foot of the lion's tower' in which that dreadful tragedy was enacted, but our guide assured us it was never shewn to any one. Just at that moment,

‘The convent bell was ringing,
But fearfully and slow;
In the grey, square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.’

“It was only for vespers, I believe; but it reminded me so forcibly of the death-scene in ‘Parisina’ that my blood seemed to freeze in my veins as I listened; and I could almost fancy I saw the headsman’s axe gleaming in the setting sun, and heard the shrill shriek, whose wild despair made even the tyrant shudder.”

“*Florence*, October 21.—So this delight-

ful journey is now at an end, and I have henceforth nothing to look forward to but the miserable alternative of uncongenial society or cheerless solitude ! I have not the courage to ask Arthur how soon he intends to leave us ; and I tremble each time I see him, lest he should announce the day of his departure.

“ I found a letter from Edith awaiting me here. She is enchanted at the idea of my having met him, and entreats me to write immediately, and tell her everything I can think of respecting him. She is especially anxious to know if he talks of returning soon to England, and seems to trust with the most perfect confidence to his unshaken fidelity and unalterable affection. His constancy has indeed been severely tried ; and a heart that can stand such a test must be worth more, oh, far more, than tongue can tell ! ”

CHAPTER VIII.

“There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno’s dome of art’s most princely shrine,
Where sculpture with her rainbow sister vies ;
There be more marvels yet—but not for mine ;
For I have been accustomed to entwine
My thoughts with nature rather in the fields
Than art in galleries ; though a work divine
Calls for my spirit’s homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels” * * * *

CHILDE HAROLD.

“*Florence*, October 22.—Just as we were sitting down to a lazy twelve-o’clock breakfast, who should come in but Arthur De Vere, in excellent spirits and high good humour, boasting that he had paid his devoirs to the Venus, and walked all

through the gallery, before we had half-opened our heavy eyes. He has also discovered that our mutual friends, the Raymonds, are still living at their pretty villa about three miles from Florence, and he proposed that we should drive over and call upon them before dinner. We agreed to this plan, upon condition that he should first act as our cicerone through the gallery, his long séjour here last winter having well-qualified him to undertake this important office.

“Having made a truly Apician repast, on ripe, bursting figs, and delicious Muscat grapes, we sallied forth from our cold and gloomy quarters at Schneiderff’s, and crossing the Ponte alla Carraja, we soon basked in the bright beams of an unclouded sun, on the opposite bank of the Arno. The change effected by those few steps was quite surprising; it was

like a sudden transition from Siberia to Ceylon. But Schneiderff's is the fashionable hotel ; therefore our sagacious countrymen submit to be starved and frozen there at an extravagant price, rather than go to one of the numerous inns on the other side, where they might enjoy warmth and sunshine on much more moderate terms. In the height of summer, the shady side of the Arno is doubtless very agreeable ; but before the end of October the sun becomes a most welcome guest, especially at the breakfast-table ; for the morning air is even now keen and almost frosty.

“ On turning from the Lung Arno into the Piazza Santa Trinità, we were regaled with the perfume of a thousand flowers. Plants which would grace a conservatory are here exposed for sale in the open streets, in rich profusion, and flower-girls

proffer their tempting baskets to your longing eyes wherever you turn, forcing you to accept a small bouquet if you will not buy a large one. ‘Wait a moment,’ said Arthur, ‘while you have yet a few crazie left; I am determined that you shall bestow them on my queen of flowers, Flora Pazza. See, here she comes.’

“Had Edith been there she must have admired, though perhaps she would scarcely have approved, the radiant smile and scream of delighted surprise with which the dark-eyed brunette darted forward to greet her old acquaintance, kissing his hand with rapturous gesticulations, and with the courteous, if not courtly, grace of simple, uncultivated Italian nature, presenting him with a bouquet of her choicest treasures. Arthur introduced us to her, commending us to

her favour as old friends of his ; upon which we had both to undergo the same ceremony, our hands being first kissed and then filled with flowers. She asked Arthur if he were not married yet ? Then pointing to me with a most provokingly malicious smile, she said, ‘ Questa è certo la sua signora sposa ; era sempre persuasa che V. S. aveva una fortissima predilezione per gli occhi neri ! ’

“ Poor Flora ! pretty as she is, this is hardly the right sort of life for her. But I am glad to hear she is engaged to be married to one of the grand duke’s gardeners ; so that her trade is likely to flourish better than ever, without any danger to her reputation. Why she has acquired the surname of Pazza I cannot imagine ; for it seems to be the general opinion here that she is more knave than fool.

“ ‘Here we are in the Piazza Gran Duca,’ exclaimed Arthur. ‘Now you have only to look and admire.’

“ Had I not seen the Piazza di San Marco, I should certainly have been still more disposed to admiration in the present instance. Florence, I own, has the advantage, and a glorious one it is, in the possession of those superb groups of sculpture ; but at the first coup-d’œil the Piazza Gran Duca presents a far less striking and magnificent appearance than that of St. Mark. Still it must be confessed there is something delightful, even in the very novelty of seeing these marble treasures, the chefs-d’œuvres of the chisel, fearlessly exposed in the open air, without any risk of injury from defacing fingers or an ungenial atmosphere. It is to me a new and really interesting sight, to watch the picturesque groups of admiring rus-

tics who on the market-days may be seen in the long arcades of the gallery, pointing out to their children, with some remains of the old republican pride of the Florentine citizen, the masterpieces of art which line its corridors and decorate its walls. This intimate acquaintance from earliest childhood with the most valuable productions of painting and sculpture must surely have a powerful effect, in expanding the mind, and cultivating a certain degree of refinement and good taste, which cannot fail to produce a beneficial influence on the general habits and manners of the people.

“ While ascending the tedious flight of stairs that leads to the gallery, I happened to drop my bouquet. Arthur picked it up ; but, whether by chance or design I will not pretend to say, he gave me his own instead, and retained mine himself.

This little incident has been perpetually recurring to my mind all day. Strange that such a trifle should have power to affect me thus !

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“After revelling in the rich treasures of the gallery for three delightful hours, I received a most unwelcome intimation from Mr. Temple, that Clara was quite tired, and that it was high time to set off on our excursion to the villa. With reluctant steps, and many a lingering look, I followed him to the carriage, consoling myself with the anticipation of passing many such hours during our stay at Florence.

“Of our drive I will say nothing, except that it lay entirely along a dusty road, between high stone walls. Arrived at our destination, my first feeling was one of unmixed disappointment. My waking

dreams of an Italian villa had led me to expect a sort of Arcadian paradise—a something not unlike the enchanted palace of Armida, as described by T'asso:—

‘ Tondo è il ricco edificio ; e nel più chiuso
Grembo di lui, ch’ è quasi centro al giro,
Un giardin v’ha, ch’adorno è sovra l’uso
Di quanti più famosi unqua fioriro.

* * * *

‘ In lieto aspetto il bel giardin s’aperse,
Acque stagnanti, mobili, cristalli,
Fior vari, e varie piante, erbe diverse,
Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,
Selve e spelunche, in una vista offerse ;
E quel che il bello e’l caro accresce all’opre,
L’arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.’

“ Such was my beau-ideal. But here is a square, stone house, with a broad gravel walk, leading in as straight and direct a line as possible to the front door, from whence it branches off in two other straight lines to the right and left, just like the nave and transepts of a cathedral.

“ Scarcely a flower is to be seen, and not

a tree of any sort, except a few dingy olives and two or three tall cypresses. I thought of some of my pet cottages in —shire, with their rose-clad walls, thatched roofs, and picturesque gable-ends,—their smooth green lawns, enamelled with flowers, and sheltered alike from wind and sun by thick masses of many-tinted foliage. Oh, how delightful it would be to transplant one of these cottages to the banks of the Arno! Beneath the deep blue of an Italian heaven, and with all the additional charms which this climate would call forth, it would indeed be a perfect realization of all my visions of rural loveliness! And why should I not possess such a paradise? From my childhood my heart has yearned for such a home:—may it not yet be mine?

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“ We met with a most cordial reception from the Raymond family, and were easily persuaded to spend the rest of the day with them. Mary Raymond, the eldest daughter, had been my school-fellow for one year at Miss Seymour’s, where she was sent to be ‘ finished,’ preparatory to her being exhibited in Italy. We had never been great friends, according to a school-girl’s acceptation of the term ; that is to say, we had never told each other all our secrets, together with everybody else’s secrets that had ever been confided to us ; neither had we exchanged locks of hair and vows of perpetual remembrance at parting ; but we were nevertheless well-pleased to meet again, and talk over old times together.

“ After dinner, we took a stroll through the grounds. The vintage is now in all its glory, and the scene is truly Italian.

Great quantities of grapes are spread out on the grass, to dry in the sun ; and carts laden with this delicious fruit are passing to and fro in every direction. We went into a vineyard, eating our desert as we walked along, and making acquaintance with some pretty contadine who were busily employed in gathering the grapes, and who welcomed our friends with such evident pleasure as plainly proved how kindly they were treated by them. Mary Raymond, who, in former days, was never supposed capable of anything beyond mere physical feeling, now affects the sentimental, and raves about ' dear Italy ' and moonshine according to the most approved method. After listening for some time to her rhapsodies, I was forcibly struck by the contrast between such empty verbiage and the genuine heartfelt expression of natural feeling,

which was beautifully exemplified by a little peasant girl of about twelve years old, who on Mrs. Raymond's asking after her mother, replied, with a look of sorrow most sad to see on so young a face, that she was still very ill ; adding, ' Ah, signora, è tutto tribola in questo mondo !' Those few simple words—what a mine of feeling they contain !

“ After a very pleasant evening, which concluded with an English tea-drinking under a vine-trellice, we bade adieu to our hospitable friends ; but not before I had received and accepted a most pressing invitation to spend some time at the villa before the vintage was over. I willingly acceded to this plan ; not that I expect to find a very congenial companion in Mary Raymond, but I wish much to study the character of the Tuscan peasantry, and to make myself well acquainted with their

habits and mode of life, which can only be done by living amongst them.”

“ Oct. 23.—Amongst the various sights I have seen to-day, the most curious, though certainly not the most pleasing, was a collection of human petrifications. Segato, the inventor of this extraordinary process, died a short time ago without revealing his secret ; but, fortunately, mankind will suffer little by this loss. It is said that he requested a private audience of the grand duke, and having shewn him, amongst other curiosities, a chess-board composed entirely of petrified pieces of the human body, he offered to publish an account of his discovery, upon the payment of a certain sum of money ; but the duke, thinking the terms too exorbitant, refused to accede to them, and Segato died soon after of vexation, as is generally supposed. His idea was, that

this extraordinary process would supersede that of embalming, and prove also far more satisfactory, as the work of decay being arrested at once and for ever, the human frame was to remain after death in as perfect a state as during life. It appeared to me that he had not quite succeeded in realizing this idea ; for some hands and feet which I saw in his strange museum were much shrivelled and discoloured, though perfectly free from any disagreeable odour. A satisfactory proof of the durability, at least, of this process was afforded by a canary-bird, which after having been petrified by Segato, was buried for some time, and when dug up again it was as sound as ever. It was afterwards exposed to a similar trial under water, and with equal success.

“ We saw the chess-board which had

failed to captivate the grand duke, and could hardly blame Sua Altezza for his want of taste. It was indeed a strange compound of the shreds and patches of poor mortality—here a piece of kidney—there a slice of liver. But no one could have guessed what they were, as they looked just like so many squares of polished wood or marble. What a pretty present it would be for the college of surgeons, with chessmen to match, made out of human bones !

“ Oct. 25.—Spent the evening at the Pergola, the favourite theatre, where Masaniello is performed night after night and week after week, to the most patient and persevering audience that was ever reduced to such dire extremities for killing the dread monster Time. This opera is in itself so pretty, and the music so lively and varied, that one can

really contrive to be pleased, in spite of the performers.

“Mazzarelli, the prima donna, possesses no merit beyond a pair of large black eyes, which she rolls about in a manner most fearful to behold. Poggi, the primo tenore, has a very fine voice, and would make an excellent actor if he chose to take the trouble, but he evidently despises his audience. I heard afterwards that he had been arrested and put into prison as soon as the opera was concluded, because he had not sufficiently exerted himself; but they will take care to let him out in time to sing again to-morrow evening! What would Rubini think of such a recipe for a good song!

“Italy, though the land of melody, ‘the fountain whence sweet music flows,’ is yet the last place in which to enjoy it in its full perfection. Though almost all

the most eminent vocalists are Italians, yet they are to be heard anywhere but in Italy. Amid the fogs of England and the snows of Russia, the children of the south exert their wondrous powers of enchantment; for the fair land to whose genial clime they owe “the glorious gift of song” is too poor to reward their exertions as munificently as the richer north. Grisi began her professional career upon the boards of this very theatre; but she soon discovered that her voice was worth far more than she could get for it here; and now, while London and Paris are alternately enthralled by her powers of enchantment, poor Florence is reduced to the miserable ranting of a Mazzarelli!”

CHAPTER IX.

“ Dans un délire extrême
On veut fuir ce qu'on aime ;
On veut se venger,
On jure de changer,
On devient infidèle,
On court de belle en belle ;
Mais on revient toujours
A ses premiers amours.”

“ Yes, we shall meet, and haply smile at last
On all the clouds and conflicts of the past.”

FELICIA HEMANS.

DAY after day De Vere lingered on at Florence, always finding some unanswerable excuse to satisfy his conscience that each successive delay was absolutely unavoidable. With the Temples he was a decided favourite, and they were not slow in helping him to discover some new

reason every day for postponing his departure. When in a good humour, they could not fail to think him a delightful addition to their party ; and when out of humour, they only said how charming he could be when he chose. Gertrude, too, whose temperament was not the most even in the world, they found infinitely more docile and agreeable when under the influence of Arthur's society ; her spirits seemed to rise at his approach ; she threw aside the air of languor and indifference which too often clouded her brightness ; she exerted to the utmost all her powers of pleasing, and seemed to awaken to a new existence.

There is certainly a great deal to be seen at Florence. The gallery alone takes a fortnight merely to walk once through it,—at least, according to De Vere's computation, who declared that

one room a day was as much as he could possibly digest or enjoy. Then a pilgrimage to Vall'ombrosa and the Camaldoli is quite indispensable ; and who could venture to withhold the tribute of a picnic from the shady groves of Pratolino ?

At last a heavy fall of snow on the mountains, followed by a cutting Tramontana, put a stop to all excursions of this description, and reminded De Vere that it was high time to set off for England.

How little he thought, when two years before he began his solitary journey towards Dover, counting the days and hours that must elapse before his term of exile should be at an end—how little he then thought that he should ever require to be reminded of the time when he might return to claim his Edith !

True he had not entered into any

formal engagement—he had never plighted his word of honour to be faithful to her—his reputation would have been unsullied in the eyes of the world had he returned home with another bride, and met Edith with the cold indifference of a perfect stranger. And might not she too be changed? Gentle and yielding as she was, and so entirely under the influence of her mother,—which influence he well knew would hardly be exerted in his favour,—could he reasonably suppose, that after a separation of two years, with constant variety, and every inducement to forgetfulness, he could return and find her still the same, still his own constant, devoted, simple-minded Edith? The more he thought of it, the less probable it appeared; and the more he saw of Gertrude, the less he wished to find Edith unaltered. But a letter which was

put into his hands just as he was leaving Florence, brought all his doubts and surmises on this subject to a decisive conclusion, and had it found him in the same mood in which he left England, it would most infallibly have raised him to the seventh heaven of hope and happiness. It was as follows :—

“ St. James’s Place, Oct. ———

“ You are the luckiest fellow on earth, my dear De Vere, and I sincerely wish you joy of your good fortune ; which, by the bye, is a piece of generosity and disinterestedness I could hardly have given myself credit for two months ago. *La belle Edith* faisait fureur last spring ; half London was at her feet, and amongst the rest your humble servant. Now do not accuse me of treachery, for upon my honour I believed it was all off between

you. At any rate, the mother took great pains to make me think so, and no encouragement was wanting on her part to back up a poor fellow's modest assurance. Well, I offered her my coronet and myself, and she refused them both, with a gentleness and firmness that only made me more determined to persevere. I followed her to St. Leonard's, where they spent the summer ; I persecuted her with my society by land and water. Boating, riding, and pic-nic parties succeeded each other every day ; but all in vain. At last I threw myself on her compassion, and implored her to tell me if I might only indulge a hope that at some future time —— . And then it all came out,—she has never bestowed a thought upon any one but you ; and now that it is all over, I must confess that she has behaved like an angel, and her mother

like —— I won't say what, as you are so soon to be her son-in-law.

“ You are by this time, no doubt, on your way home, to carry off your prize. I shall be on the look-out for you at Dover, with the band of the 10th, trumpets, kettle-drums, and all, to greet you with ‘ See the conquering hero comes.’ Till then, farewell. Ever yours,

“ ANNANDALE.”

The feelings of De Vere on reading this letter may be more easily imagined than described. He reproached himself bitterly for having been inconstant for one moment, even in thought, to a heart so faithful, a love so devoted ; he felt that he was wholly unworthy of such a treasure, and that had he lost it for ever it would have been no more than he deserved. In short, his meditations on

the road between Florence and Leghorn consisted chiefly of self-reproaches for what he then considered his own dishonourable conduct, and gratitude to Edith for her affection and constancy ; accompanied perhaps by a little pardonable vanity and complacency, at finding himself preferred to his friend Annandale, who even without a coronet might have proved a formidable rival.

Ten days and nights of almost incessant travelling soon brought him safely to London, where his first care was to consign to the post-office a letter to Edith, which he had concocted during the journey. Such a letter ! Three sheets and a half, quite full of devotion, gratitude, unchangeable fidelity, &c. ; in short, just such a letter as her fondest wishes could have desired. This was enclosed, *selon les règles*, in an envelop

to Lady Fitzgerald, containing a few common-place expressions of politeness, as cold and haughty as was consistent with civility.

“I must keep on good terms with her, at any rate,” thought he to himself, “till I can fairly call Edith my own. I have little enough to thank her for, to be sure, but I must not let her see at present that I know she has been playing me false when I could not defend myself.”

In due time De Vere made his appearance at Oakley Park. The meeting was just as much dreaded, and yet longed for, as such meetings usually are. Edith stood at her window, watching the stars and the park-gate alternately ; now looking at his letter, which said “six o’clock,” and then at her watch, which said “twenty minutes to seven.” She had passed the whole of that day in a state of

nervous excitement, and then came that dreadful sinking at the heart which always succeeds the flutter of anxious expectation.

Just as the clock struck seven, and she was turning away shivering from the window, a moving light quickly gliding through the trees attracted her eager eye. She scarcely breathed—a few moments more, and the sound of carriage-wheels was heard—the door-bell rang—Edith threw herself upon a sofa and gasped convulsively. Presently she heard a gentle knock at the door of her boudoir. She thought it was her mother, and made an effort to rise, but her trembling limbs refused to support her. Another moment, and she was clasped in Arthur's arms. Absence, suspense, uncertainty, all—all was forgotten in the rapturous bliss of that moment, or remembered only to en-

hance its joy. The past, with all its tears and sorrows, had vanished like a painful dream, and the bright future lay before them, arrayed in those rainbow hues with which youth and hope so fondly (ah, why so vainly ?) invest it.

CHAPTER X.

“ I’ve taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger ; to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise ;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find,
A country with—ay, or without—mankind.”

CHILDE HAROLD.

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“ FLORENCE, November 10.—He is gone, and if ever I see him again, it will be as the husband of another ! Ere that, I shall have steeled my heart to meet him with indifference ; I shall have ‘ taught my woman’s pride to hide my woman’s love.’ And am I then so weak, so degraded, so utterly fallen, as to stoop to

love one who cares not for me,—to love unasked—to love without a hope of return? Oh no! he never would have been more to me than Edith's friend, had he not too plainly proved that I was something more to him. On the brink of what a fearful precipice have I been wandering, with closed eyes and heedless steps. Thank Heaven, I see my danger before it is quite too late! Edith will soon banish me from his thoughts,—and I,—yes, if one spark of honour, principle, or womanly delicacy yet burns in my bosom, I will struggle with this weakness till I have torn it from my heart.

“This ring which he placed on my finger at parting, begging me to keep it for him till we meet again—I dare not, must not keep it; the very knowing that I possessed a gift of his—a parting souvenir—a sort of pledge not to forget

him—would infallibly annul all my good resolutions.

“No ; every trace, every record of the only being I have ever loved shall be destroyed.

“The Arno flows deeply beneath my window, and to its faithful keeping will I consign my treasures. These drawings—this bouquet, his gift of yesterday—this ring—these long-hoarded, though faded flowers—these favourite lines in his own too well-known hand—all shall perish—yes, all!—It is done—I heard the splash as they sank into the water, and now nothing remains to remind me of him. Nothing?—Every scene we have gazed on together, every path we have trod together, will speak to me of him, with a voice that cannot be hushed.” * * * *

“November 18.—I have again been

spending some days at the villa, and though all my intercourse with Mary Raymond only tends to prove to me still more clearly

‘How much a dunce who has been sent to Rome
Excels a dunce who has been kept at home,’

yet, as I was not entirely dependent for amusement upon her powers of agreeability, my visit has been both pleasant and profitable. The opportunities it has afforded me of mingling with the Tuscan peasantry only make me wish to become still better acquainted with this simple-minded and interesting people. They are generally spoken of in the works of English travellers as a wealthy class, living in easy circumstances, and ‘abounding in pearls and frailties,’ as one of these off-hand describers of poor Italy asserts. A cheerful and contented

people they certainly are, and the neatness and cleanliness of their little tenements afford a pleasing contrast to the squalid wretchedness and dirt of the miserable hovels one sees in most other parts of Italy. But their happiness does not arise from idleness ; their life is one of hard labour, and their fare is by no means so substantial and nourishing as that of the greater part of our own peasantry. The ‘ dolce far niente ’ is a pleasure scarcely understood, and very rarely enjoyed, by the Contadini ; they are an active, industrious class, and in the intervals of toil, on holidays and festas, they seek their entertainment rather in athletic games, or in the enlivening dance, than in basking in the sunshine, or sleeping beneath a vine-trellice, according to the imaginary habits of their countrymen,—habits which are again and again attri-

buted to the Italians by successive novel-writers and tourists, who, without troubling themselves to inquire into the character of the people they describe, follow on in the beaten track, and quietly calumniate a whole nation merely to give a neat turn to a period, or a piquant conclusion to a sentence.

“ Like the gigantic outline of his Alps and his Apennines, standing forth in bold relief against his clear blue sky, there are striking points in the character of the Italian, which it requires no extraordinary genius to remark, no peculiar penetration to discover. The glorious flood of light poured over the vine-clad plains of Italy, dazzles the eye of the ordinary beholder, and exhibits to him only one uniform mass of brilliant colouring. It is the painter who feels the loveliness of this land of beauty, who marks each varying

tint and flitting shadow, who contemplates with delight that veil of mist by which each distant object is 'softened, and rounded, and rendered doubly beautiful,' and that magic glow which harmonizes the whole, and throws an air of enchantment over the Italian landscape.

"The broad contrast of light and shade, the striking features and prominent peculiarities in the character of the Italians, may be easily remarked, even by the passing stranger ; but it requires much patient research, and a long residence in the country, to gain a knowledge of their secret springs of action, and to distinguish those characteristic traits which give to them, as a nation, the stamp of originality.

"From an early age all the children of the family take part in the labours of the day ; they rise at about four o'clock in

the morning, take their breakfast in the fields, and do not return home till mid-day, when the customary siesta invigorates them for the remainder of their daily task. They continue at work in winter till dusk, and in summer till six or seven in the evening. The girls are not exempted from their full share of toil, and perform many very fatiguing operations. The fertile soil, which yields a crop of olives and grapes, independently of grain, is so encumbered with the olive trees and vines as almost entirely to preclude the use of the plough ; consequently the ground is prepared for the crop of wheat or barley by manual labour, and the heavy mattocks employed for this purpose are generally consigned to the women. In one of my early morning rambles I stopped to converse with some of my rustic friends whom I

found digging in the Podere, and observing a slight, delicate girl, who is an especial favourite of mine, looking pale and tired, I asked her how long she had been at work, 'Only three or four hours,' she replied; but on further inquiry I learned that she had been kept up the two preceding nights till nearly two o'clock in the morning, shelling beans for the Florence market, her father being obliged to set off with his cart-load of vegetables at a very early hour, and the want of rest, she confessed, had somewhat exhausted her. This was not, however, mentioned as any hardship, nor did her sisters appear to suffer at all, from constant employment during the day, and very few hours of repose at night. Yet so much do these girls prefer their country life to the increased luxuries with the diminished freedom of the city,

that the most advantageous offer will not induce them to abandon their home for domestic service. One of the sisterhood had been prevailed on to make the experiment, and had exchanged her labours in the Podere for the lighter occupations of a Marchesa's palace in the capital. But neither the comparative ease of her new employment, nor the many advantages she enjoyed there, could make up to the young contadina for the loss of the pure air of her native hills, and in a few months she joyfully returned to the paternal roof, and soon recovered the good looks of which her sojourn in the mansion of the padrone had rapidly deprived her.

“ The constant flow of spirits, and the natural wit and pleasantry which form a prominent feature in the character of this people, enable them to maintain the

most uninterrupted cheerfulness ; and the song and the joke beguile many a hard day's labour, which might otherwise prove tedious and wearisome. With the exception of my fair friend Annina, who appeared far too fragile and delicate a creature to be working in the fields beneath a burning sun, none of the young peasants in the vicinity of the villa seemed at all over-fatigued by the variety of their daily occupations.

“The active employments of the Tuscan peasantry lead them to enter with great zest into the innocent pleasures of their frequently recurring festas. Indeed, so scrupulously are the saints' days observed in Florence and its vicinity, and with such praiseworthy zeal is every season of idleness warranted by the church of Rome devoted to masses and processions, that a stranger who chanced to

spend one week in the country might well imagine that the ground brought forth its fruit spontaneously, and was not indebted to the labour of its inhabitants for the luxuriant harvests which cover its fields. These festas, however, are not spent exclusively in amusement and recreation, but carry both old and young at least once to church.

“ So much importance indeed do they attach to a regular attendance at the mass, that to be absent, even unintentionally, from the service, is esteemed no trifling misfortune. Mrs. Raymond told me that she found her maid in tears one morning, and upon inquiring the cause of her distress, she discovered that it arose entirely from her having been left behind by the other servants, when they went to attend mass in the chapel attached to the villa. She endeavoured

to console her Abigail by reminding her that she might easily make up for the omission, by going to the parish church in the afternoon, and that this would be just the same thing as if she had heard mass in the private chapel in the morning. But the tender conscience of the maid would not allow her to assent to the arguments of her mistress. ‘Che!’ she replied. ‘non è la stessa cosa Signora;’ and she went out of the room sobbing and wringing her hands, and exclaiming, ‘Che scandalo!—che scandalo!’

“ On these festas, all the finery of the contadina is produced; not only does the blooming Sposina come forth arrayed in pearl necklace and earrings, with a black beaver hat surmounted by an enormous plume of feathers, but the antiquated grandmother still wears the

ornaments which bedecked her in the freshness of her youth, when her step was lightest in the village dance ; her brown and shrivelled neck is still encircled with the pearls whose whiteness it once rivalled ; nor would she lay aside these baubles with greater complacency than an English dowager would dispense with the unbecoming weight of the family diamonds. So true is it that our sex is essentially the same in all countries, that I fear there is no disputing the definition of a certain crusty old bachelor, who asserts that ‘ Woman is an animal, loving finery.’

* * * *

“ If the Neapolitan Lazzerone, by his thoughtless gaiety, of which neither despotism nor hunger can deprive him, reminds us of our brethren of the sister island, whose never-failing spirits have

so long borne them up against famine and innumerable hardships, the Tuscan, calm, considerate, and calculating, may justly be regarded as the North Briton of the Italian peninsula.

“ This character develops itself in a striking manner in the marriages of the lower ranks, which are not generally contracted at a very early period. Singular as it may appear to those who are accustomed to regard the Italians as slaves to every momentary impulse, a marriage frequently does not take place for five or six years after the engagement is formed. It must be confessed, however, that the effect of this delay is not strikingly portrayed in the countenances of the betrothed lovers, at least as far as my observations have extended ; the cheek does not blanch, neither do the accents falter, nor is the step less elastic, or the

laugh less loud. In some instances, indeed, the engagement appears to survive the affection, real or imaginary, which gave rise to it. A contadina on Mr. Raymond's estate had been for several years affianced to a gardener who lived on the other side of Florence, and came over at distant intervals to pay his respects to his intended ; these visits were, however, very 'few and far between,' and the celebration of the marriage was continually delayed. If any one inquired of Angelina when 'lo sposo' intended to make his appearance in bridegroom's attire, her usual reply was, 'Chi lo sa?' and when bantered upon the dilatoriness of the gentleman, she exclaimed, in true Tuscan accent, 'Che? non tocca a me!' At length the lady began to grow tired of her philosophical admirer, and candidly confessed that if he did not soon appear

to claim her hand, she would put an end to the 'noia,' and provide herself with another protector. It appeared upon further investigation that, as a corps de reserve, she had already selected a bachelor of fifty, who was decidedly the best looking man on the estate; and as I hear that the old gardener is now very ill with a violent fever, from which it is scarcely likely that he can recover, it seems not improbable that the lady may find the benefit of having two strings to her bow.

“The unfortunate system by which marriages are generally contracted in Italy, upon principles of *convenance*, seems also to extend its influence to the humbler classes, and the affair is usually settled between the sposo and the parents, before the wishes or feelings of the future bride are in any degree taken into consideration. The engagement once

contracted, the young people are not prevented by any feelings of false delicacy from being seen frequently in each other's company; and at the village festa, or in the religious procession, the sposo always places himself by his mistress, and distinguishes her by a thousand little attentions, equally harmless and gratifying.

“ My fair friend Annina is engaged to a young peasant a few years older than herself; and this, I believe, is strictly a marriage d'inclination. A marriage, however, it is not yet, and for this very weighty reason, want of funds to begin the world with. I asked her father one day, after complimenting him upon his daughter's beauty, why Annina and Maximiliano were not united at once, especially as they have already been engaged for more than two years? The

old man stood with his loose great coat thrown over his shoulders like a Roman mantle, his countenance beaming with satisfaction, and after disclaiming with true paternal pride all pretension on the part of his daughter to the praises I had bestowed on her, replied with a significant gesture, “Signora, mancano i quattrini.” Upon my questioning him as to the amount of this deficiency, it appeared that although the young lady did possess a ‘vezzo di perle,’ it was not sufficiently dignified for a ‘signora sposa,’ and until one of a larger size and greater value could be obtained, it was impossible for the marriage to take place.

“The lively author of ‘Italy’ severely animadverts upon the passion for pearl necklaces and gold earrings which prevails so universally amongst the contadine of Tuscany. Now it cannot be

matter of surprise that the philosophical reason for encouraging and promoting such a taste should escape the observation of one accustomed to see marriages contracted with true Hibernian circumspection, when the bride and bridegroom, contented with the whiskey and potatoes of the nuptial feast, look with perfect unconcern, not only to the want of breakfast on the following morning, but to the years of famine and wretchedness which must ensue.

“The fact is, that the natural love of finery and ornament which influences the Tuscan peasant, in common with her equals and superiors in other countries, has been ingeniously converted into a salutary check upon those ill-starred connexions which, contracted in all the ardour of youthful impetuosity, leave their victims to deplore at leisure the

ruinous consequences of their thoughtless precipitancy. The head-dress of gold or silver-lace, the earrings, and the pearl necklace, with which every sposa is furnished before she accompanies her sposo to the altar, ensure the possession of a certain degree of property to the youthful couple ; and although these nuptial ornaments are regarded as fondly, and parted with as reluctantly, as the portraits of a long line of ancestry by some feudal noble, yet still, as possessing an intrinsic value, they can in any serious emergency be either pledged or sold, to rescue the humble family from utter misery and destitution. The pearls of which these necklaces are composed are of an inferior kind to those which we are accustomed to prize in England, and are found chiefly, I believe, in the Mediterranean ; but as a necklace seldom consists of less than

six or eight rows, (and often of many more,) the cost is considerable. I saw one of which the price was equal to thirty pounds of our money, and am told that they rarely cost less than twenty pounds. The gold and silver lace of the head-dress also is so good as to be untarnished after having been worn at every festa and procession in the village for five-and-twenty years.

“These ornaments are the only vestiges of the ancient costume now remaining in Tuscany, with the exception of the black beaver hat and feathers, which is still almost universally worn by the women on Sundays and holidays. When at work in the fields, they generally wear the large round Leghorn hat, in all the amplitude of its original circumference, which is admirably adapted to shade them from the scorching sun.”

* * * *

“ I found Mrs. Raymond one morning seated before her medicine chest, dispensing sundry salutary powders and potions to a group of peasants who were anxiously waiting for them. She told me that, having been very successful in two or three cases, she was now quite overwhelmed with applications for advice and medicines ; and not only was every disease in the village submitted to her consideration, but many little domestic affairs were brought under her inspection.

“ On one occasion, a young woman of pleasing appearance, but evidently much depressed and out of spirits, came to beg for some medicine for her husband, who was, she said, very much out of health. Mrs. Raymond desired her to be a little more explicit, and to give her at least a

general idea of the ailments which affected her better half, or she could not possibly undertake to prescribe for him. After much hesitation and many blushes, the pretty contadina at length disclosed the melancholy truth, that the 'caro sposo' who, before the fatal knot was tied, had been 'sempre, ragazzo gentile, sempre giovane eccellente,' had become gradually less and less amiable, and was now positively 'rabbioso.'

"Having made this confession, the poor girl expressed her anxiety that the Signora Dottore would vouchsafe to furnish her with some potion or drug to diminish the violence of lo sposo in his fits of rabbia. Charles Raymond, who was standing at his mother's elbow, and appeared to take a lively interest in the case under consideration, shrewdly suspected the real cause of the malady, and begged to be

allowed to prescribe for the patient. The remedy he proposed was that most strictly orthodox and unpalatable draught, a strong dose of genuine Epsom salts. Mrs. Raymond having assented to it, the potion was immediately prepared with great care, and consigned to the sposina, with the strictest injunctions to administer it that very evening, when her husband returned home from his daily occupation.

“ About a week had elapsed when the girl again made her appearance at the villa, with such a smiling face, and such an improvement in her looks, as immediately betrayed her secret. With the overpowering torrent of voice with which her countrywomen are so eminently gifted, she hastened to pour forth her grateful acknowledgments, and to enumerate all the advantages she had derived

from the elixir of the Signora Dottore. The sposo, who had before been 'rabbioso,' was now as gentle as a lamb, and, thanks to this true 'elisir d'amore,' peace and happiness were restored to their humble home. Nothing could put a stop to this harangue but default of breath in the eloquent orator, who at last, having fairly wearied herself as well as her audience by this voluminous expression of her gratitude, took her departure, exclaiming, 'Viva l'allegria ; grazia a Dio ed a vostra eccellenza, non è più rabbioso lo sposo.' 'E non sarà mai più rabbioso, cara mia,' rejoined the young practitioner whose skill had effected this wonderful cure, 'se gli darà, ogni Sabato sera, una tazza di quella medecina divina.'

"The girl readily promised acquiescence; but as the following Saturday and many succeeding ones have passed by without

a repetition of her visit, it may fairly be concluded that the sposo found the 'medecina divina' so little to his taste, that he took care not to expose himself to a second infliction by any exhibition of ungovernable temper."

CHAPTER XI.

“Do you not know I am a woman? What I think I must speak.”
As You Like It.

“Monti superbi, la cui fronte Alpina,
Fa di sè contro i venti, argine e sponda!
Valli beate, per cui d'onda in onda,
L'Arno, con passo signoril cammina!”

GERTRUDE AYLMER TO EDITH FITZGERALD.

“Florence, Nov. 19th.

“WHAT strange notions people are apt to form of the climate of Italy before they have tried it! This sagacious observation, my dear Edith, is made under the withering influence of a bitter tramontana, which freezes up all my faculties,

and reduces me to a state of torpor and inanity. Mr. De Vere made his escape precisely at the right moment, having enjoyed Florence as long as it was enjoyable, and leaving it before he had time to feel the blighting effects of the first fall of snow. For my part, I find it so intolerable, that I would gladly brave the quarantine, and rush on to Rome at once ; but Clara, who basks in the sunny precincts of the Lung' Arno all the morning, and enjoys the genial warmth of crowded rooms every evening, declares that she will not hear of such a mad scheme ; and as I am credibly informed that the road will soon be open, I must try to submit patiently to my fate for the present. I did my best to dance off the lethargy that oppresses me, at a ball given last night by the Grand Duke at the Pitti Palace ; but it would not do.

The brilliancy of the scene, the dazzling glare of light, the sounds of mirth and revelry, depressed instead of exciting me. I felt like a spirit of darkness amid that gay crowd ; and as my eye wandered from one thoughtless, frivolous face to another, I shrank into myself, like a snail into his shell, and felt that I could have nothing in common with any one of all that vast mass of human beings. I am afraid I am of too selfish a nature to find enjoyment in the mere fact of seeing others happy, or else I had ample scope for the indulgence of such a benevolent gratification when the supper-room was thrown open. A most splendid entertainment it certainly was, and nothing could exceed the empressement of the company to do justice to the Grand Duke's good cheer. Then, indeed, the business of the evening seemed to com-

mence in good earnest. An enormous sturgeon quickly disappeared — whole coveys of partridges were swept from the field, and pheasants were bagged by the score—corks were flying in all directions, and whichever way I turned I encountered a shower of champagne.

“ One unfortunate little lady, sparkling in diamonds and rubies, in her laudable anxiety to leave nothing untasted, appeared rather to have over-rated her capacity, for I saw her making her exit as fast as the crowd would permit, with her pocket-handkerchief held tightly to her mouth, and a compassionate friend following close at her heels, exclaiming, in tones of the deepest commiseration, ‘ Ah, poverina mia, hai troppo mangiato !’

“ Nor were the dignitaries of the church insensible to the good things of this world. The pope’s nuncio, the

sacred representative of infallibility at the Tuscan court, set them a bright example in this respect. With a bottle of champagne in one hand, and a bumper of the sparkling liquid trembling at his lips, he exclaimed, with soul-thrilling pathos, ‘ Ah, questo è il vero paradiso !’ What conscientious catholic could dare dispute such undeniable authority ?*

“ Having given you a slight sketch of court festivities at Florence, which certainly do honour to the kindness and hospitality of the amiable sovereign and his fair consort, I will now shew you le revers de la medaille, and we will take a peep at an Italian fireside, around which are assembled a small party of friends.

“ Being invited to a conversazione at the house of a lady of considerable reputation amongst the literati of Florence, we

* Facts.

gladly availed ourselves of such an opportunity of getting introduced to some of the most gifted men of the day, who, we were told, always frequent her society. An Italian *conversazione* answers precisely to an English tea-party, both terms being strictly applicable to the species of entertainment which they offer,—as in England you generally get nothing but tea, and in Italy, literally nothing but conversation,—both proving often equally insipid and unsatisfying.

“ Great was the astonishment of all the party when, on this memorable evening, the tea equipage made its *débüt*, perhaps for the first time, in Madame P—’s drawing - room. Mysterious whispers ran round the circle, in which the word ‘*Inglese*’ evidently predominated; and I was presently informed by a fair neighbour that it was solely and entirely out

of compliment to us that this extraordinary ceremony was to be performed. For some minutes there was a serious debate as to which of the ladies present should preside over these mysterious rites; but at length it was unanimously settled that the daughter of the lady of the house should be the chosen priestess of the tea-pot. To do her justice, it must be confessed that she performed her part admirably, and the whole affair went off with considerable éclat. The Italians appear to have a peculiar horror of tea, finding, I suppose, that it has a powerful effect on their nerves, owing to their being so little accustomed to it. Cries of 'molto allungato, poco tè, molto latte,' were heard on all sides; and I believe, after all, the urn had a much larger share than the tea-pot in the hospitality and *bonne chère* of the evening.

“ A very favourite amusement in these little coteries, is a sort of *jeu de société*, called ‘*la sibylla*,’ which is something like our well-known nursery game of ‘crossquestions and crooked answers,’ but requires much more thought and ingenuity. The party sitting in a circle, one person asks you a question in a whisper, and another gives you a word ; in your answer to the question you must introduce this word. Par example : an abbate, who was present, was mischievously asked, ‘*Se non sarebbe meglio che i preti prendessero moglie?*’ The word which had been given him was ‘*specchio*,’ a mirror. He replied, that ‘it was clear the sibyl was no advocate for celibacy, as she would have all the priests to marry and have children, that in them, as in a mirror, might be reflected all their own piety and virtues.’

“ It frequently happens that there is so very little affinity between the word and the question, that it requires some talent to bring about a respectable connexion between them. On the whole, however, it must be confessed that an Italian conversazione, unless enlivened by a little music, is a very heavy and wearisome affair. From what little experience I have hitherto had, I should say that the Italians, generally speaking, do not shine in common conversation. They certainly do not possess the Frenchman’s happy art of being always able and ready to ‘faire les frais de l’entretien,’—of never being at a loss for something to say, which, if neither witty nor brilliant, is at any rate amusing and à propos. Talking to some people is like playing at battledore and shuttlecock against a wall: if you are a skilful player and make clever

hits, your shuttlecock must needs rebound; but if by chance you fail, no helping hand comes in to the rescue, and the shuttlecock falls to the ground.

“Pray take compassion on my dullness, and let me be cheered ere long with the sight of your hand-writing; for there is nothing here that can afford me a moment’s gratification, compared with one single line from you. In my daily walks to the gallery, I never fail to inquire at the post-office, though repeated disappointments have thrown a cold chill over my hopes, as I turn away empty-handed day after day, after hearing, like poor Corinne, ‘*qu’il n’y a pas des lettres.*’ ”

* * * *

“Finding amongst our letters of introduction for Florence, one addressed to Madame Vallabrègue, better known in

England as Catalani, we were anxious to lose no time in making the acquaintance of this celebrated songstress. She resides with her husband at a delightful villa about three miles from Florence, on the Bologna road. We found her busily engaged at her favourite amusement, working in her garden, dressed 'en paysanne,' as she laughingly observed, her face being protected from the sun by one of those large round Leghorn hats, always worn by the contadine in Tuscany. A superb Newfoundland dog, Diane by name, followed close at her heels, and was introduced to us as her faithful friend and inseparable companion.

“She received us with so much kindness and cordiality that we soon forgot it was the first time we had ever seen her ; and after spending a most agreeable hour

with her, we parted like old friends, having accepted a very pressing and hospitable invitation to dine with her the next day. She shewed us all over her villa, in which she evidently takes great delight. Its situation is indeed truly superb, standing as it does on the side of a steep hill, completely covered with gardens and vineyards, and overhanging the fair city of Florence, whose domes and towers lay sparkling at our feet in the bright sunshine. It commands a magnificent view of the whole expanse of the lovely Val d'Arno, whose winding stream, like a silver thread, we could trace for many miles ; while the towns of Pistoja and Pescia, with innumerable villages, farms, and villas, lay dotted here and there, like dark spots upon the bright verdure of that sunny plain. Catalani's drawing-room is filled with pictures, trinkets, and

objects of vertû, the gifts of emperors and princes, many of whom are now no more. It must be with a proud feeling of inward satisfaction that she looks at these costly presents, and remembers that she commanded not only the admiration and homage, but the esteem and respect, of the sceptred donors. She is perhaps one of the very few of whom it may justly be said, that her character as a woman is as unblemished as her reputation as a singer is unrivalled. She always speaks with great warmth of the kindness she experienced in England, and says she feels that she can never do enough to prove to the English her deep sense of gratitude for all the hospitality she received from them. Her frankness and cordiality emboldened us, before taking leave of her, to prefer a humble petition for a song. With the most per-

fect good-humour she instantly complied with our request, though she said she was still suffering from the effects of a recent cold, and hoped we would put up with some petite bagatelle. With a truly French refinement of politeness, she sang ‘Home, sweet home;’ thinking, no doubt, that nothing could be more grateful to our English ears. I must confess that for my part I could have listened with still greater pleasure to her wonderful voice, had its rich tones been poured forth in the enchanting strains of her own melodious Italy.”

* * * *

“I have now enjoyed that gratification; I have heard her in *Norma*, and not only heard, but seen her. Last night, at a little musical soirée, at which only a very few intimate friends were present, she became suddenly inspired as it were with the

spirit of former days, and went through that exquisite scene, 'In mia man alfin tu sei,' with a heart-rending pathos, a deep yet dignified anguish, that was quite overpowering. Though wholly unsupported, and totally unprepared for the attempt—with no other dagger than her fan, and no better accompaniment than the discordant jingling of an old harpsichord—it is perfectly wonderful how the magic of her soul-subduing voice, and commanding yet graceful figure, could, alone and unassisted, produce such a thrilling and irresistible effect.

“And yet, what is she now, when compared with what she was? A perfect wreck! She says herself, that it often makes her quite melancholy to feel how her powers have forsaken her—how her voice fails her. The soul is still the same—ardent, brilliant, and energetic as

ever ; but the voice no longer obeys its impulse—no more gives utterance to its emotions ! The master-hand in vain sweeps o'er the broken lyre—its strings are powerless, its chords are mute, it obeys not the touch which once called forth its thrilling harmonies, but which now, alas ! can awake those sounds no more.

“ We concluded this delightful evening at Madame L——’s, where we happened to look in on our way home, and found Niccolini and several other lions assembled at her conversazione. There is a striking simplicity and unassuming modesty of manner in all the Italian literati whom I have yet seen, which is extremely pleasing. Far from any attempt at shewing off, or monopolizing the attention of the party, they require to be drawn out with some degree of skill before they will

let one see that they have any pretensions to superiority over the common herd.

“ Another most remarkable trait of Italian amiability and good feeling made a deep impression on my mind, in a visit we paid this morning to an infant school, lately established here by a young Florentine noble of high rank and great abilities. It was a real gratification to look at the smiling, happy faces of these sixty little creatures, and to witness the beam of true Christian benevolence which lighted up the features of their kind-hearted benefactor, as he beheld their cheerful countenances, and listened to their united voices singing their little hymn ‘ with all the pomp of childish art,’—

‘ Come in braccio di Maria,
Riposavi pargoletto,
Così pur l’anima mia,
Buon Gesù riposa in tè.

Per guardarmi dal periglio
M 'accompagna un angioletto ;
Che se un giorno gli somiglio,
Vuol portarmi in ciel con sè !'

“The music was as sweet and simple as the words, and the combined efforts of these sixty little warblers, rude and often inharmonious as they were, could not but produce a pleasing effect.

“It was delightful, too, to see Italian women of rank and talent superintending the school in person, and devoting the whole of their time to it, from eight in the morning till four in the afternoon, each taking a week by turns.

“Madame Rosellini, the lady who happened to be presiding there to-day, is the daughter of the celebrated improvisatrice La Fantastici. I was told that she inherits a considerable share of her mother's genius, but is of too timid and retiring a disposition to exercise it publicly. She

has devoted her talents chiefly to the instruction of the young, and is in fact the Edgeworth of Italy. Her 'Comedies for Children' are excellent, and have had great success. It is a pity they are not better known in England, as there are so few Italian works adapted to the capacity of young beginners."

CHAPTER XII.

“And last of all (if you please), the Sentimental Traveller, (meaning thereby myself,) who have travelled, and of which I am now sitting down to give an account, as much out of necessity, and the *besoin de voyager*, as any one.”—**STERNE.**

“Elle est mariée! . . . O Dieu, faites que ce soit pour son bonheur!”—**ADELE.**

GERTRUDE AYLMER TO EDITH DE VERE.

“Florence, December 9th.

“OF all your friends, my dearest Edith, I shall probably be the only one from whom you will not receive a letter of congratulation on this joyful event. I who love you better than any of them, and from whom you would naturally ex-

pect the warmest expressions of interest. But you know me, Edith, and you can understand me. You know that when I feel most deeply, I am least able to give utterance to my feelings ; and you require no empty words to assure you how sincerely I rejoice in your happiness.

“ I gave myself up entirely to thinking of you on that interesting day ; I pictured to myself all the usual concomitants of such an event—the church, the pathway strewn with flowers, the *déjeûner*, and the departure ; not forgetting a liberal allowance of smiles and tears, Brussels lace, and orange blossoms. Bitterly did I regret not having given up my tour, rather than be absent at such a time. You could not possibly have gratified me more deeply, dearest Edith, than by saying that you found a moment to regret

my absence, even while standing by the altar. But I have no intention that this unfortunate separation should deprive me of all my privileges ; so pray do not forget our old engagement, that whichever of us married first should give her bridal wreath to the other, to be worn on a similar occasion.

“ You need not send it off to Florence by the next courier, as I am not in immediate want of it ; but pray bring it with you when you come to Rome ; for who knows but that some penniless prince or moustachioed marchese may induce me to abandon all thoughts of ever returning to England ?

“ And now, am I really to take you at your word, and believe that you can wish to be invaded in your delicious retreat at Beechwood by rumours of adventures so stale, flat, and unprofitable as mine ? At

any rate, you must prove that my letters are not unwelcome intruders, by writing to me sometimes in return, or even *my* vanity (all-sufficient as it is for most purposes) will fail to convince me that they can indeed be acceptable at the present moment.

“ It must be confessed that I have not given you a very tempting picture of Florence ; but I will frankly own I am not a fair judge of its charms. I have been thoroughly out of sorts and out of spirits during the greater part of my séjour here ; consequently I look at every thing with a jaundiced eye, and all around me is tinged with the sombre hues reflected from my own distempered mind,—which, like an ill-tuned harp, yields nothing but discordant sounds, however masterly the hand that sweeps its strings. But I must not complain, for I have had an

hour or two of real enjoyment to-day, such as I have not known for some time past. I set out to take my solitary ride as usual this afternoon in the Cascine. An immense number of people were there, driving, riding, and walking, having been allured from their several hiding-places by the brightness of the day. I longed to be alone ; so leaving the beaten track, I crossed a shallow stream, (which, insignificant as it may now appear, is no other than the far-famed Mugnone of Boccacio,) and, after trespassing across some fields, I found myself on a smooth expanse of turf, extending for several miles along the banks of the Arno.

“ Here there was not a single human being to disturb my meditations ; and I must indeed have been a spirit of evil, could aught of gloom have tinged them amid such a scene.

“ It was the very perfection of calm, quiet loveliness : the trees that fringed the banks on either side of the river were glowing in all the rich and varied tints of autumn, and the snow-capped mountains blushed in the rays of the setting-sun. The soft turf springing beneath Khaled’s light step as he swiftly flew over it—the myriads of pheasants sporting on the grass—the boats gliding gaily down the stream, and the fresh pure breezes that revived and gladdened my spirit—all combined to enhance the enjoyment of this delightful ride. It was indeed a lovely evening—one that I shall often look back upon with fond remembrance in after years, when the very sound of the dead leaves, as I crushed them beneath my feet, nay, even the very smell of that fading foliage, will recur to my memory as

freshly and vividly as if it were but yesterday.

“The road to Rome being now open, we are to proceed there next week. The exhilarating thought of being at last so near the attainment of my fondest wish, will make the intermediate time endurable. I would gladly set off to-morrow, but the Temples having a ball or two in view, it would be cruel to deprive them of such a gratification ; and in the exuberance of my delight at the prospect of a speedy departure, I am content to let them be happy meantime in their own way.”

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“Buonconvento, Dec. 15th.

“Enfin, ma bien aimée, you behold me actually on my way towards Rome, and in such good-humour with myself and all the world that I cannot refrain from

making you a sharer in my pleasure, as, alas ! you have too often been in my gloom. We left Florence yesterday ; but having been kept up till a very late hour at a *soirée dansante* on the preceding night, it was nearly two o'clock before we commenced our journey ; so that it was as much as we could do to reach Poggibonsi, a small town, or rather village, three posts from Florence, where we put up for the night.

“ Mr. Temple and I take it by turns to ride Khaled, and Clara and the baggage follow at a rather more deliberate pace in the phaeton. Amongst the baggage I include Mlle. Victoire and a white spitz from the Tyrol, who engrosses all her affections. I strongly recommend you to try this mode of travelling ; it is so exhilarating to the spirits, when cramped and wearied with sitting in the carriage

for several hours, to spring into the saddle and gallop away, leaving dull care to follow if he can. But what am I thinking of? You will have nothing to do with dull care or triste ennui ; the days will seem only too swift for you, and the miles too short. Ah, c'est bien une autre affaire pour moi ! We spent an hour or two at Sienna to-day, to rest the horses and lionize the cathedral. Of all I saw there, Bernini's Magdalen pleased me most. The countenance is lovely, and the attitude very graceful, but I thought the drapery rather clumsy, and it struck me, on the whole, that the execution was by no means worthy of the conception. The library boasts a very antique group of the Graces, much admired by connoisseurs, though one of them has lost her head, and another an arm, and the whole thing is so mutilated

that it leaves ample scope for the imagination to supply the deficiencies, and make it anything but what it now is.

“I cannot conceive what charms Sienna can hold out, to induce so many of our countrymen to spend the summer there. The narrow streets, and high, gloomy-looking houses, give it a most cheerless appearance, and there is a deadness and want of animation in the whole air of the place, that must be extremely oppressive to the spirits. All the neighbouring country on the Roman side is one vast desert, without a symptom of vegetation, owing, I believe, to the volcanic nature of the soil.

I took leave of Sienna without a sigh, and mounting Khaled, rode on to Buonconvento, over a flat, uninteresting tract of country, but enjoying much the keenness and freshness of the clearfrosty air.

“ Here we are, then, comfortably established for the night, in an unpretending little inn, which in England, perhaps, would scarcely be deemed habitable, but which is, nevertheless, very superior to many others we have been obliged to put up with on the Continent. After all, one must be very fastidious if one cannot make oneself snug by a good blazing wood-fire, in spite of brick floors without even a bit of matting, beds without curtains, sheets as rough as sackcloth, and no other covering except a coarse woollen rug. As to food, we carry with us a supply of wine, coffee, bread, and arrow-root ; so that we certainly need not starve. For the rest, one is sure of getting eggs everywhere, and sometimes even a tough beefsteak to crown the bill of fare. This would not sound very tempting to an epicure ; but there is nothing like a good

day's exercise in the open air, especially the sharp, keen air of December, to render the coarsest viands appétissant. Besides, if you are not so magnificently lodged and fed as in an English hotel, the bill that awaits you the next morning is proportionably modest."

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" Montefiascone, Dec. 17th.

" I was too idle to write to you yesterday, dearest Edith, or rather, to speak the plain truth, it rained all day, which involved me in a fit of the vapours, and I considerately forbore to inflict my dullness upon you.

" We have this morning made our entrée into the pope's dominions, at Acqua Pendente, where we stopped to dine. Our first specimen of papal fare was anything but satisfactory; it consisted of mutton-chops, that most assur-

edly have been supplied by some old ram, the patriarch of the flock, and the stringy carcass of a boiled turkey, which might fairly have disputed precedence with the ram in point of seniority. By way of washing down these morceaux choisis, I called for some hot water, which I incautiously mixed with the small remnant of my wine-flask before I discovered, to my infinite dismay, that it was the remains of the broth in which the turkey had been boiled !

“ We intended to have slept to-night at Bolsena, a small town on the banks of the beautiful lake of that name ; but the rogue of a landlord demanded such an exorbitant price for the two miserable little rooms he offered us, that we determined to push on to Montefiascone, rather than submit quietly to such an imposition.

“ The lake charmed me in spite of the

gloomy weather. Agitated by the wind, it was of a deep green colour, and covered with miniature breakers, that dashed upon the shore, foaming and roaring with all their little might, as if in mockery of the ocean. The richly-wooded hills that surround it were clothed in warm tints of russet brown, and had I but looked at them on a bright evening, when lighted up by the brilliant glow of the setting sun, they would indeed have formed a most lovely scene. But to-day all was triste and sombre; and before the night closed in, we had a second edition of yesterday's fog—a fog as dense as any that London itself could boast.

“ We did not reach our resting-place till long after dark, and chilled as we were by exposure to wind and rain, we were obliged to put up at a wretched little inn, where the freezing blast entered at every

door and window, constantly extinguishing our solitary lamp, and forcing our teeth to chatter in spite of our taciturn mood. Pour comble de malheur, we were devoured by fleas, and in constant dread of scorpions, having detected one in our chimney-corner, who, tempted by the very unusual luxury of a fire in this cheerless dwelling, came out of his hiding-place to enjoy the genial blaze.

“ The miserable occupants of a vetturino coach, which has followed us all the way from Florence, are now just arrived, and I hear them besieging the inn-door and squabbling for admittance—which, poor souls, they are scarcely likely to obtain, we having already more than filled this capacious hostelry. Perhaps if we were very snug and comfortable, we might feel disposed, in the exuberance of our complacency, to let them share our fire ;

but as it is, our whole stock of commiseration is expended upon ourselves, and selfishness is the ruling passion. How true it is that nothing tends so much as misery to make one misanthropic. With this sage and original observation I will wish you a very good night; a blessing which I have little hope of enjoying myself.

“ *Ronciglione*, Dec. 18.—We are now within forty miles of Rome! I can hardly contain myself at the thought, and would fain have urged on our weary steeds, instead of wasting fourteen long, tedious hours here in vain attempts to sleep, or at best, in tantalizing dreams of to-morrow’s glorious vision.

“ The scenery as we approached this place became quite enchanting. On one side lay the lovely little lake of Vico, embosomed in wood; and on the other hand,

Soracte raised its proud head amid the wild waste of the Campagna, like a lone island in the midst of the ocean. The glowing sunset lighted up the autumnal tints of the trees, and shed a warm red hue over the whole landscape. It was true Italian scenery,—so bright and mellow that one almost forgot the sharp, frosty air of a December evening, till it faded away with all its brilliant hues, and the yellow oak-leaves relapsed from their golden glories into sober sadness. Then the pale, cold moon peeped forth in a slender crescent from beneath her veil of light transparent clouds ; the Campagna was soon shrouded in a thick mist, and the chilliness of winter succeeded to the genial brightness of one of autumn's fairest days.

“ Arrived at Ronciglione, we all sallied forth to explore the country while dinner

was preparing. Our path led us into a deep ravine, through which rippled a clear stream of sparkling water, while huge masses of grey rock rose perpendicularly on either side, and seemed to shut out this happy valley from the rest of the world. Flocks of goats were browsing upon the patches of herbage they found in the almost inaccessible clefts ; and gay troops of Lavandaje, in their picturesque white veils and scarlet boddices, were tripping homewards from the fountain, with their baskets on their heads, singing as they went. An English family-party having arrived soon after us, it was agreed, for want of sufficient accommodation, that we should dine together in the only sitting-room the inn afforded. We anticipated some amusement from this arrangement ; but alas ! they were shy and silent, as our countrymen usually

are, especially when just setting out on their travels, and anxious above all things to keep up the dignity of John Bull.

“The father of the tribe, a respectable, elderly gentleman, who had evidently been dragged abroad sore against his will, for the gratification of some half-dozen sentimental diary-writing daughters, entertained us with a long list of grievances, in which the douânes, the roads, the post-horses, and more especially the post-boys, came in for their due share of abuse. They were all rogues, thieves, and liars, and he only wondered how any man in his senses could trust himself amongst them. To make up for the insipidity of his English conversation, this worthy gentleman afforded us infinite diversion by the force and originality of his Italian. I contrived for some time to keep my coun-

tenance with all due gravity and decorum, till at last he set all my efforts completely at defiance by calling out to the waiter for more toast—‘Aspettatore, portate mi più tosto!’

“When, on ordering breakfast for the next morning, we took the precaution to bespeak a supply of milk—a luxury which is not often to be procured—mine host replied, with sundry grimaces and gesticulations, ‘Farò il mio possibile, per servirle; ma signori miei, non lo faccio io!’

“My paper is already so full that I have no room left to tell you of our safe arrival at Rome; so you must take it for granted till you hear from me again.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Je veux étudier Rome ; elle en vaut bien la peine.”

VOLTAIRE.

“ Ici l'on se console des peines même du cœur.”

CORINNE.

EXTRACTS FROM GERTRUDE'S DIARY.

“ DECEMBER 20.—Am I, then, really at Rome ? Do I tread my mother's native soil ?—do I breathe her own soft balmy air ? Land of my forefathers ! lovely and glorious land, how proud I am to call thee mine !

“ I rose this morning at day-break, and effecting my escape unperceived from the

hotel, I flew up the Scala della Trinità, and found myself on the Monte Pincio. I knew it all at a glance. I felt at once as if I were gazing on an old familiar scene. Thanks to my dear Signora's vivid descriptions, I do not come as a stranger to my own bright land—no—I already feel that it is indeed my long-wished-for home, and my home henceforth it shall be.

“ I immediately recognised the convent of the Sacre Cœur, which can boast perhaps of the very best situation in Rome, and commands one of the most magnificent prospects of the eternal city. I looked towards it with eager eyes, longing to enter, and yet not daring to intrude at so early an hour. Presently, to my great delight, the bell sounded for matins, and I ventured to approach the door of the church, scarcely hoping to find it

open. I pushed aside the heavy curtain that hangs before it, and entered. Not a soul was there. I threw myself on my knees, and gave way to the feelings that overpowered me. It was the first time I had knelt in a catholic church, though the religion of my mother was ever dear and sacred to my heart. I thought of her ; I thought of another too, who is now far away, and I wept bitterly. But the calm repose and perfect stillness of the place soothed and composed my spirits ; and when the deep, full tones of the organ burst upon my ear, and strains of heavenly music floated on the air, I felt as if I were suddenly transported to some holy, happy region, far from this sorrowful, distracting world. It was like a delicious dream. The fragrant incense, the white-veiled worshippers, the solemn chant of the officiating priest, and the soft, me-

ludious voices of the responding nuns—all combined to produce an effect as soothing and powerful as it was thrilling and unearthly. The music ceased, the voices were hushed, and all was still again.

“ I looked up ; the nuns had vanished, and I was alone once more. But I had not seen my beloved friend, and I could not bear to leave that spot without at least hearing some tidings of her. After due deliberation I summoned courage to ring at the door of the convent, and ask for la sœur Angelique ; and when the little portress seemed to demur, I entreated her so earnestly to let me come in, that she could not resist my eloquence. I took from off my neck the rosary which my friend had given me at parting, and begged the portress to convey it to sœur Angelique, and tell her that the wearer wished to see her, if only for one moment.

“ I was desired to wait in the parloir, and in a few minutes I was clasped to my dear Signora’s affectionate heart. Oh ! how delicious it was to hear her kind voice once more, in the sweet music of her own *dolcissima lingua*,

‘ *Quel parlar che nell’ anima si sente.*’


What a relief to my weary heart, to pour forth its long-imprisoned feelings to one who was never tired of listening to them ! I opened my whole soul to her with perfect confidence, except on one point ;— *that* must ever remain sacred between Heaven and myself.

“ Dear Angelique ! With such an ardent temperament, such an enthusiastic heart, how can she possibly endure the chilling atmosphere of a convent, the dreary monotony of such a tedious existence ? It would fret and chafe me into madness !

No ; till my spirits are crushed for ever, and my heart is fairly broken, I never could submit to pine away in perpetual captivity, debarred even from the enjoyment of the blessed sunshine, and the fresh pure air of heaven. I can scarcely forgive myself for having been the means of dooming poor Angelique to such a fate; and yet she assured me it was the lot she most coveted—the boon most to be desired of all that money could procure for her. Well, I must be content to let her be happy according to her own fancy; but most assuredly it is not according to mine.”

“ December 22.—Spent six delightful hours to-day in the Vatican, between the gallery and library. We were introduced to Mezzofanti, the librarian, who is considered the first linguist in the world. He conversed with the different members of our party in Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek,

German, Polish, French, Bohemian, English, and Italian, and with so much ease and fluency that it would have been impossible to decide which of these was his native tongue. He told us he understood between forty and fifty languages, including their various dialects; and amongst these he mentioned Welsh, Irish, and Gaelic, all of which he speaks with wonderful facility. He has even read Chaucer, and can appreciate its beauties, which, as he triumphantly observed, was more than most Englishmen could boast ! His manners are singularly unpretending and simple, and his countenance beams with good humour and benevolence. He shewed us several curious old manuscripts, amongst which I particularly noticed Henry VIII.'s famous 'Defence of the Seven Sacraments,' dedicated to Leo X., which procured him the title of 'Defender of the

Faith ;' and (most interesting of all) some original letters of his to Anne Boleyn before he married her. The writing is so bad as to be scarcely more legible than an Egyptian scroll ; but it has been deciphered and transcribed in a fair round hand, for the benefit of future billet-doux writers. He always signs himself, ' votre loialle et assuré serviteur, H. aultre  ne cherse R.'—i. e., H. R. autre ne cherche que A. B. While I was copying this curious conceit on a blank leaf of ' Mrs. Starke,' one of the underlings in office espied the theft, and exclaimed, ' scusi, signora, ma questo non si permette.'

“ After leaving the library, I enjoyed the privilege of walking through the gallery with an English sculptor of considerable eminence, whose remarks tended greatly to enlighten my ignorance, and

open many new beauties to my eyes. That famous Torso especially, which at first sight appeared to me so hideous and uninteresting, he explained so cleverly that I think I am beginning to comprehend that there is really much to admire in its headless trunk. Hercules is supposed to be there represented after his apotheosis, which is shewn by the absence of blood-vessels &c., a god not requiring the same internal conformation as a mortal. The stomach appears hollow and contracted, thereby indicating that food was not necessary to his sustenance. From the position of the muscles, his attitude is supposed to have been, leaning upon his club with one arm, while the other was raised, as if to encircle some form to which he was looking up. I should like much to see a restored model of this wonderful statue, as it would

greatly assist one to understand and appreciate the mutilated original.”

“ December 28.—Visited the studio of Tinerani, a pupil of Thorwaldsen, and the first Italian sculptor of the present day, excepting perhaps Bartolini, at Florence. He has just executed a bas-relief for Chateaubriand, which struck me as the finest work of the kind I had ever seen. The subject is the death of two martyrs in the Colisæum. The heroic sufferers—a Christian convert and his wife—stand alone and unprotected in the midst of the bloody arena. A ferocious tiger is in the act of springing towards them. The woman stands with her arms meekly crossed upon her breast, her eyes raised to Heaven, with an expression of mingled agony and resignation which is thrillingly touching. The man darts forward, as if to interpose

between the savage monster and his wife, and to offer himself as the first victim to its fury, in the vain hope, perchance, of saving her. It is the very perfection of eloquence in marble, and might melt a heart of stone to gaze upon it. I feel as if they were sculptured on my inmost soul, those noble countenances, in which mortal anguish and triumphant faith are so exquisitely blended, and death seems already almost swallowed up in victory. The idea is taken from ‘*Le Genie du Christianisme*,’ and the work is worthy of the sublime genius who inspired it.”

“January 8.—I have enjoyed a most delightful treat this evening in hearing Rosa Taddei, the celebrated improvisatrice, and indeed, the only woman in Italy who now publicly exercises that wonderful talent. Hearing accidentally this morning from

Thorwaldsen that she was to improvise at the Academia Tiburina to-night, I lost no time in trying to procure a ticket from one of the members, in which I at last succeeded, though not without great difficulty. On arriving at the Academy, I found the room already crowded to excess, and soon saw that it would be hopeless to attempt to effect a forcible entrée. I was just turning away in despair, when one of the masters of the ceremonies took pity on me, and carrying me round to a private door, he opened it, and having gently pushed me in, instantly closed it upon me, before I had time to see where I was. I certainly had no idea of making my *debût* before the public in so unexpected a manner, and was therefore not a little disconcerted on finding myself fairly turned out upon the stage. However, I had scarcely a moment to reflect upon

my disagreeable situation, when, with the most considerate politeness, I was beckoned forward to a seat between two personages of no less distinction than Cardinal ——, and la Rosa herself. She is apparently about thirty years of age, and were it not for her inelegant and rather clumsy figure, she would be a strikingly handsome woman. A small diamond seigné sparkled on her dark, glossy hair, which was simply braided over a very white forehead, and confined in a plait at the back of her head. Her eyes are brilliant and expressive, and her countenance open and prepossessing. She was dressed in white, which was far from becoming, as it rendered more conspicuous the excessive embonpoint of her figure; but in this respect she is not worse than the generality of her countrywomen, who, whatever may be their per-

sonal charms, have little to boast of *en fait de taille*. The white dress and blue sash were perhaps worn by *la Taddei* in imitation of *Corinne*, for it is precisely the costume in which she made her triumphal *entrée* into the capitol, according to *Madame de Stael*. ‘*Sa robe était blanche, et une draperie bleue se rattachait au dessous de son sein.*’

“ After some little time had been spent in listening to the uninteresting recitations of several members of the Academy, *la Rosa* was unanimously called for. The first subject assigned her by one of the audience was the meeting between the spirits of *Bellini* and *Cimarosa* in another world,—‘*L’ombra di Bellini rincontrando quella di Cimarosa nelle sfere.*’

“ She was supported by a slight accompaniment on the harp, consisting merely of one simple strain continually

repeated. After standing for a few minutes on the platform, apparently in deep thought, she commenced as if suddenly inspired, and poured forth, without the slightest hesitation, such a torrent of poetry that it was absolutely overwhelming. She seemed violently agitated, her bosom heaved, her eyes filled with tears, and she often gasped convulsively for breath; but her brilliant imagination never failed her—her rich store of ideas appeared quite inexhaustible, and only once was she for a moment at a loss for a rhyme. She looked like the priestess of Apollo upon the magic tripod, labouring under the overpowering excitement of inspiration, till at length she sank down totally exhausted and overcome by the violence of her emotions.

“ Her metaphors were perfectly beautiful, and her compliments to Bellini most

exquisitely conceived. I cannot condemn them as exaggerated, for I am sure they would be warmly and enthusiastically re-echoed, not only by every Italian heart, but from the remotest corner of the world, wherever music holds her empire over the soul.

“He is gone, that mighty master of the lyre, and his mourning country feels too truly that she has none to supply his place! La Taddei makes Cimarosa tell him that although it may seem hard to be thus cut off “nel fiore dell’ età,” yet he must not lament his fate, since he had lived long enough for the glory of Italy!

‘Figlio mio, assai vivesti,
Dell’ Italia per lo splendor.’

He tells him, that in his wanderings amid the spheres he may yet learn purer and nobler strains, and harmonies still more divine than those he sang on earth.

“ The next subject proposed was ‘ La moglie di un soldato, che trova il corpo del marito nel campo di battaglia :’ coll’ intercalare.

‘Se ho perduto fra le armi un consorte,
Ho donato alla gloria un campion.’

“ To render this performance still more difficult, she asked the audience for some rhymes to the word consorte, such as, ritorte, forte, morte, &c. They gave her nine or ten, and she contrived to bring one of them into every verse in its regular turn, just as it had been accidentally written down on the slip of paper which was put into her hands, and this was done without any appearance of straining the sense for the sake of the rhyme. This poem was in ‘ottave,’ and was certainly the most successful of all her brilliant and astonishing performances this evening.

“ Her third and last subject was ‘ An-nibale in Capua ;’ but I was so completely over-excited by what I had already heard that I could scarcely listen to it. Poor Rosa, too, appeared so fatigued as to be hardly able to stand ; — ‘ mais l’esprit tout puissant l’emportait sur le corps défaillant,’ — and she came off triumphantly, amid the rapturous applause of her enthusiastic audience.

“ Happy, happy woman ! how I envy her glorious destiny !”

CHAPTER XIV.

“ The prima donna, though a little old,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes.
The tenor’s voice is spoilt by affectation ;
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow ;
In fact he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow.”

BYRON.

“ January 16.—The Romans talk so much of their opera, and of the various perfections of Schutz, the prima donna, that we began to feel quite ashamed of being obliged to confess that we had never heard her, so we took a box at the Teatro Apollo for this evening, and have fairly sat it out.

“ We arrived just in time for the fag-end of a most deplorable attempt at a ballet, of which cotton stockings, leather shoes, thick legs, and ultra short petticoats, were the most striking points.

“ Then came the opera, or rather shreds and patches of various operas—a complete musical olla podrida. First we had an act from *Inez di Castro*, followed by a duet from *Norma*; then a scene from the *Puritani*; when just as *Elvira* was to make her appearance, and we were solacing ourselves with the anticipation of a *bonne bouche* at last, after all the nauseous stuff we had been compelled to swallow, the curtain suddenly dropped, and one of the singers came forward amid groans and hisses, to announce the untimely end of that night's performance, owing to ‘ *un improvvisa indisposizione di Madama Schutz.*’

“ This was a species of improvisazione for which the audience had no taste, and they were not slow to testify their strong disapprobation of the measure. But the prompter immediately took the hint, and effected a precipitate retreat from his box, the orchestra began packing up their instruments *con spirito*, and everything seemed to promise a speedy conclusion to the evening's entertainment. However, groans and hisses kept the pit alive for the space of half an hour, and nobody seemed disposed to retire.

“ Perseverance won the day, or rather, the night. Bassadonna, the favourite tenor, came forward, and as soon as the tumult had in some degree subsided, he said that Madama Schutz was a little better, and that after the ballet the opera should be resumed. Bravas and cheers

succeeded this welcome announcement, and all was smooth again.

“ The second ballet then commenced, and a pitiful performance it was, being scarcely good enough to amuse a child. This was succeeded by another long pause, and when at last our patience was quite exhausted, Schutz reappeared, and the Puritani was dragged on to the end.

“ Mr. Temple contrived to make a sort of couch upon three chairs at the back of the box, on which he established himself as comfortably as he could, and soon fell fast asleep, grumbling audibly from time to time, when the shouts of applause disturbed his slumbers. The house was very ill lighted, and bitterly cold, and I must indeed be ‘ *fanatica per la musica* ’ to the last degree before I expose myself to such another evening’s discomfort.

“ January 17.—This being St. An-

thony's day, (the patron saint of quadrupeds,) we repaired to his church, in order to see him bestow his blessing, through the medium of his proxy the priest, upon all his dutiful children who might come to ask for it, provided always they brought quattrini enough in their pockets to pay for it. These Roman saints are cunning fellows, and knowing how much more valuable a thing becomes when it is not to be had for nought, they take good care that it shall not be their fault, at any rate, if their blessings are not duly appreciated.

“ St. Anthony's representative stands at the church door, with a prayer-book in one hand, and a whisk in the other. One of his attendants holds a basin of water, and the other a plate in which to receive the fees. As the animals are brought up in succession by their respec-

tive owners to be blessed, the priest mutters a few Latin words, and dashes a whiskful of water in their faces, upon which they generally kick and run away, and so ends the ceremony. One horse, in particular, was so disgusted at this cold salutation, that he reared, and threw his rider. On seeing this feat, I could not help observing to one of the peasants who surrounded our carriage, ‘ See what comes of getting your horses blessed !’

“ ‘ True, signora,’ he sagaciously replied, ‘ were it not for the blessing of holy St. Anthony the unfortunate beast would doubtless have killed his master, or, at least, have broken some of his bones ; but now, you see, thanks to our gracious saint, they are both safe on their legs again.’

“ Several donkeys, their tails tied up with red tape, peasants’ horses decorated

with scarlet and yellow feathers, and one asthmatic pug dog, panting and wheezing in rose-coloured ribbons, constituted the chief number of the blessed during the hour I spent in watching the ceremony. Had I come earlier in the day I should have seen a more respectable assemblage, as the horses of all the Roman nobility, the aristocracy of the stables, were the first to attend St. Anthony's levee."

"January 20.—Received a most agreeable visit from Cardinal ——'s brother, Don Luigi; a very pleasing, intelligent man. He gave me a full description of the ceremony of electing a pope, and spoke very unreservedly upon many points on which I should have thought he would be afraid to commit himself; but doubtless he felt the facts were so notorious that he could compromise no

one by making them a subject of conversation between us.

“ He says that the only career open to any man here is in the ecclesiastical state, and then nothing can be more democratically open to all ranks than the government. The present pope, Gregory XVI., is said to be the son of a tailor or hatter in the Venetian states. He was a common frate of the Camaldolesi in 1824, a cardinal in 1829, and pope in 1831.

“ Education seems to be the last qualification that is deemed essential in an aspirant to the papal tiara. At Rome the stockings make the man, as Don Luigi facetiously observed, ‘ Il momento che si mette le calze viole si diventa una persona di gran talento. Non è la testa ma la calzetta che fa il papa !’

“ Rome at the time of the conclave is a fine theatre for contemplating the stir

of human passions,—so many varying interests are aroused, such contests of parties take place, both within and without the conclave, and such complete uncertainty prevails as to the individual on whom the choice of the college may fall. From the moment a pope dies, each of the cardinals is treated by his own family with all the ceremony and respect due to the sovereign pontiff, because, for aught they know, he may in a few days be raised to that dignity.

“ The nominal number of the cardinals is seventy-two, but they seldom exceed fifty-eight or sixty.

“ During the time the conclave is sitting, and all the cardinals are shut up in it, they take the reins of government alternately, three at a time, for the space of three days. All communications from the ministers are received by the secretary to the conclave through the grille.

“ In one of the saloons of the Vatican, called the hall of the conclave, the cardinals take their seats, each on his throne, being all of them popes for the time. An urn is placed in the centre, into which each cardinal drops a piece of folded paper, containing the name of the person for whom he gives his vote. These names are afterwards read out to the assembly, and if any one person has two-thirds of the number of votes, and one over, in his favour, he is declared pope ; if not, the papers are destroyed, and they go through the same form again after dinner.

“ This ceremony is repeated day after day, till at last, as the votes become more numerous in favour of one individual, and it begins to be no longer a matter of uncertainty as to who will be pope, all the cardinals get up and bow to their fortunate companion. When, at length, he is

declared to be duly elected, he usually demurs a little at first, and proposes to decide the matter by prayer, which, however, invariably ends in his consenting to accept the tiara.

“ ‘ Il Signore dice loro sempre di accettare il papato,’ observed Don Luigi, with a sly chuckle. The cardinals then kiss his feet in token of submission, after which he embraces them all, as a pledge of fraternal affection. He is afterwards publicly crowned in St. Peter’s.

“ All the courts of justice and some of the public offices are closed while the conclave is sitting, which, in the case of the present pope, was for the space of two months. The mint, however, continues to issue coins, for I have a Roman scudo bearing on one side this inscription, ‘ Sede Vacante.’ ”

CHAPTER XV.

“Ave Maria! blessed be the hour,
The time, the clime, the spot where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o’er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint, dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air.
Ave Maria! ’tis the hour of prayer!”

BYRON.

GERTRUDE AYLMEYER TO EDITH DE VERE.

“Rome, January 22nd.

“I AM glad I forbore to give you my first impressions of St. Peter’s, for my feelings on that point have undergone a complete change in the space of one short month. The first time I entered that glo-

rious temple my eyes were so dazzled by its splendour, my senses so utterly bewildered by the stupendous mass of magnificence which overwhelmed them, that I wandered about from one part to another, like a troubled spirit, and could find no resting place on which to repose.

“ But now it is far different. Now, when my spirit is wearied and harassed by the petty annoyances and vexations of every-day life, how gladly it turns to this sacred edifice, and finds, amid the solemn stillness, the holy calm that reigns there, a composure and peace which the world can never give. This evening, especially, I have passed within those marble walls an hour of enjoyment such as this dreary earth can rarely afford. I had been hearing vespers in the Gregorian chapel. The fine-toned organ had poured forth its delicious harmony ; the deep,

clear voices of the choir floated on the perfumed air in richest melody ; and, seated on a low step at the foot of one of the stalls, my face buried in my hands, I remained as if entranced and rooted to the spot, till the sound of departing footsteps recalled me to myself.

“ I hastily rose up and left the chapel just as the custode was about to lock the iron gate, which would have kept me a prisoner there for the night. The shades of evening were fast closing in, but I lingered still, to take a parting look. The crowd of worshippers had vanished ; only a few yet remained kneeling before the different shrines. All was stillness—that calm and holy stillness which solemnizes the soul, and raises it from earth to heaven. The sweet odour of the incense still perfuming the air ; the constellation of tiny lamps around the high altar, shed-

ding a 'dim, religious light' through the gloom that pervaded the temple; the silence, deep and unbroken, save by the faint sound of a distant footfall, as, one after another, the last lingerers slowly departed;—all combined to shed over that twilight hour a magic influence, a soothing charm, which can never be wholly effaced from my mind.

“ Spell-bound I stood, while shades of the past and visions of the future floated before me in swift succession, till I was aroused from my reverie with a sudden start by the loud cry of ‘Andiam!’ from a deep-toned bass voice close to my ear, which was faintly re-echoed by a shrill treble from the opposite extremity of the building. One door was then quickly closed with a loud jarring sound that reverberated through the aisles, and I hastened towards the other, not without

some apprehensions lest I should be overlooked amid the darkness that then prevailed, and doomed to repose that night upon a couch of marble.

* * * *

“ Amongst my highest and most valued enjoyments this winter I esteem the society and friendship of Thorwaldsen. He had known my mother from a child, and it was from a bust of her which he did for my father upon his marriage that he formed the model of the principal figure in one of his most exquisite groups. There is something peculiarly amiable and benevolent in the expression of his fine, open countenance. His bright grey eyes beam with intelligence, and his long white hair, falling down almost to his shoulders, gives him a most interesting and venerable appearance. He has lived at Rome ever since the year 1797, and

speaks Italian like his native language. His family were Icelanders, but his parents always resided at Copenhagen. He, however, speaks of Iceland as 'mia patria,' and has sent a present of a baptismal font, to be placed in one of the churches of that island.

“ Nothing can exceed his generosity and kindness in encouraging young artists and sculptors, to whom his patronage must be of the greatest service. His own house, which looks most comfortless and is almost entirely destitute of furniture, contains, nevertheless, quite a valuable gallery of modern paintings, which are principally the works of young rising artists at Rome, all of whom he rewarded most liberally for their labour. All of these, together with a choice collection of Etruscan vases and other objects of art, it is his intention to bequeath to Denmark, in the

hope of founding at Copenhagen a museum for the fine arts. Mons. Vernet, the head of the French Academy here, has just completed a most striking portrait of him, from which I hope some engravings will soon be made.

“ Innumerable are the attempts that have been made to transmit to future ages a correct likeness of this celebrated sculptor ; but Vernet’s picture is the only one that does him justice,—the only one on which his admirers can delight to gaze, and feel that there is nothing left to wish for. A miniature model of him in terra cotta, by Woltrecht, a German sculptor, is also an excellent likeness. He is there represented just as he is seen in his studio, in a loose sheepskin dressing-gown, working upon the model of one of his statues. I have procured two copies of it, one for myself, and another which

I hope some day to see in your bijou of a boudoir at Beechwood.

“ But you are tired of Thorwaldsen. Well, I must forgive you, for you do not know him yet. Oh how I long to introduce you to all my pets, animate and inanimate. Amongst the latter must be included Tasso's oak, which I hope to shew you on just such an evening, and by such a sunset, as I have seen it by to-day. It stands on a hill in the convent-garden of St. Onofrio, commanding a superb view of Rome on one side, and St. Peters on the other. The whole campagna was bathed in a flood of rosy light, and the cold white outline of the snow-covered Apennines on one side contrasted beautifully with the rich warm glow on the other, where the sun was slowly sinking to rest on the golden bosom of the Mediterranean.

“ Tasso is buried in the church of the neighbouring convent. A small stone alone records the fact; but it is in contemplation to raise a handsome monument to the memory of this highly-gifted and much-injured man. Are not his works a far more splendid and durable monument of his genius than aught that human ingenuity could devise? Some interesting relics of Tasso were found at Rome in 1833, in the library of an old palace,—viz., a casket, containing his letters to Leonora, with documents relating to his trial, and an account of his imprisonment, in his own hand-writing, which all tend to prove (what was before only a matter of conjecture) that his love for Alphonso’s sister was the real cause of his persecution.

“ It appears that the prince, to save his sister’s fair fame and spare the poet’s life,

had him shut up in a Dominican convent, as one labouring under temporary derangement; and Tasso was then wrought upon to give a written acknowledgment that he had not been in his right mind. He hoped by so doing to appease the prince, and shorten the period of his confinement; but finding month after month drag wearily on, his patience forsook him, and he wrote a sonnet against Alphonso, in which he vented the bitterness of his wounded spirit without restraint. The original copy of this sonnet is in the casket, in two fragments, just as it was torn from his hands. Alphonso could not forgive the satire, and Tasso was immediately removed to the miserable dungeon I mentioned to you in the hospital of St. Anna at Ferrara, there to linger away the best years of his life. His letters to Leonora are deeply interesting, and ap-

pear by the discoloration of the paper on one side, to have been worn, or perhaps concealed, next her heart. There is also a little book in this same precious casket, Bocaccio's 'Labyrinth of Love;' the silk cover is embroidered by the princess, who, as appears from some lines in the first page, presented it to Tasso herself:—

‘ Questo prezioso dono
 Che ornar con l'ago, ad Eleanora piacque
 Lo vide Aracne e tacque—
 Or se la man che fè la piaga al cuore,
 Si vago fè l'amore,
 Il cieco laberinto
 Come uscir ne potrò, se non estinto?’

“ This is the only abstract ever made from these MSS., for the possessor is very tenacious of them; and for the lines I am indebted solely to a retentive memory. The preservation of these documents is easily accounted for. Guarini,

the author of the 'Pastor Fido,' was Alphonso's private secretary, and Tasso's bitter enemy. The papers fell into his hands as they were seized from one or other of the lovers, and he collected them in this casket, which was found concealed behind some old books in a library belonging to the Guarini family. You were always a warm admirer of Tasso, and I feel sure that this account of his ill-fated attachment will be interesting to you."

CHAPTER XVI.

“ To the palace
 Colonna, as I told you ;—
 Oh, I know
 My way through Rome.”

DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

“ You’d better walk about, begirt with briers,
 Instead of coat and small-clothes, than put on
 A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
 Although you swore it only was in fun ;
 They’d haul you o’er the coals, and stir the fires
 Of Phlegethon, with every mother’s son,
 Nor say one mass to cool the caldron’s bubble
 That boiled your bones, unless you paid them double.”

BEPPPO.

EXTRACTS FROM GERTRUDE’S DIARY.

“ JANUARY 25.—As I chanced to pass
 by the Colonna Palace in my morning
 ramble, I could not resist such a tempta-

tion to turn in, and take a peep at its treasures. The gallery itself is the most splendid in Rome, though many others contain a more valuable collection of pictures. It is full of marble, and gilding, and curious work, and on the ceiling is painted the battle of Lepanto, in commemoration of a victory which procured for a Colonna the honour of a triumph. Here are two superb portraits by Titian, supposed to represent Luther and Calvin, and an exquisite St. Sebastian, by Guido. There is also a highly ludicrous old painting, in the most rigorous style of primeval simplicity, in which the Virgin appears to be busily engaged in beating the devil with all her might; it is the work of Nicolo Alunno di Foligno, who flourished before the time of Pietro Perugino.

One of the greatest curiosities in this gallery is a cabinet of immense value,

covered with alto and basso relievos in ivory. The Last Judgment, accurately copied from the famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel, forms the centre piece, and is really a most astonishing chef d'œuvre of art, all the little figures being so perfectly correct, both in attitude and expression, that they would bear examination through a magnifying glass. This elaborate piece of workmanship was executed by two German brothers about two hundred years ago.

“ January 26.—Had any one ventured to describe to me the scene I have witnessed this evening, I should infallibly have set it down as an infamous fabrication. I could not have believed anything so monstrous ; but I have seen it with my own eyes, and ‘ facts are facts.’

“ We took a box for this evening at the

Teatro Tordenone, one of the best theatres in Rome. The opera was the 'Moise in Egitto' of Rossini. Having always heard how very particular the Roman government is in not allowing a frate, or nun, or even a corpse to be brought forward on the stage, I felt not a little curious to know how they would contrive to avoid a most objectionable scene in this opera, in which the author, with singular impiety, introduces the first person in the Holy Trinity, as speaking to Moses from the burning bush. What then was my astonishment on finding that this scene is not only allowed to remain, but that it is acted throughout with the grossest disregard of common decorum. A square thing painted like a bush is placed upon the stage, inside which a man is concealed, if indeed concealment it can be called, for upon the bush being

struck by a flash of lightning from heaven, this Jack-in-the-box begins to move a lantern up and down, to represent the burning of the bush, through the medium of a clumsy transparency. But what is still worse, when Moses comes up to the bush, as if to examine it, this person chants forth a long recitative,—thereby clearly personating the first person of the Trinity ; and more than once his singing was so very bad that his performance was received with a universal hiss from the whole house.

“ I could not refrain from making some remarks upon this exhibition to some Roman friends who accompanied us, but they did not receive my critique at all in good part. Now I have been informed, on credible authority, that when the ‘ Montecchi e Capuletti’ of Bellini is represented on the Roman stage, the old monk, who forms

one of the finest characters in the drama, is entirely suppressed, and his place is supplied in a very clumsy manner by a physician; because, forsooth, a common frate is considered too holy and exalted a being to be introduced on the boards of a theatre. From some similar feeling of delicacy and refinement, the body of Juliet is not brought forward on the stage, whereby all the interest of the last scene is entirely destroyed. This is the more extraordinary, as the Romans are in the habit of making a most offensive display of their dead, both in the streets and in the churches, where they are often exposed for many hours to the public gaze, dressed out in their best attire, and with their faces uncovered. It is not so much the religion of the country as its government that is to be blamed for these deplorable inconsistencies.

“ January 28.—Spent an hour with Thorwaldsen in looking over his gallery of pictures. A Neapolitan group, by Riedel, a Prussian artist, struck me as particularly beautiful. The scene is on the sea-shore, a boat in the foreground, and the dim outline of Capua in the distance, while the clear blue waters of the Mediterranean lie between. A fisherman, in the picturesque dress of the lazzaroni, is playing on his guitar, and casting tender glances on a lovely girl, who is seated on the ground, with her head coquettishly turned away from him, while her little sister, a sprightly, bright-eyed child, is mischievously peeping over her shoulder. The raven tresses of the girl are relieved by a red and silver ribbon ; and large, loose sleeves of white cotton, curiously embroidered, with a petticoat of brilliant scarlet, complete her simple

and becoming costume. Her little white feet peep out from beneath her petticoat, and a pair of wooden shoes with scarlet ties are lying beside her, together with a tambourine filled with ripe, glowing oranges, that make one's mouth water to look at them. Thorwaldsen told me that this picture was universally admired, and that the artist had, in consequence, received orders for so many copies that he declared he was heartily tired of it, and was often tempted to wish he might never see or hear of it again.

“ Amongst many other interesting things, Thorwaldsen shewed me some of his original designs for the monument to Pope Pius VII. in St. Peter's. In the one finally adopted, there was behind the chair of the pope a back-ground of azure studded with gold stars, and above the two figures, on either side, a dark-reddish

ground, which added greatly to the effect. All this was promised him, but he was shamefully deceived. 'Per farmi dispiacere non hanno voluto farlo,' said he, in his mild and gentle manner, in which not the slightest shade of anger or ill-feeling was discernible, though he must necessarily be extremely annoyed about the whole affair. A connoisseur, of great taste and feeling, pointed out to me the other day in St. Peter's, the immense disadvantage under which this monument labours, from having, as it were, no frame. It is left quite bare and exposed, instead of being shut in by a recess or alcove, as all the others are, and it is therefore brought immediately in contact with the gigantic proportions of the whole church, which make it appear quite insignificant. In addition to this, it is placed in the worst possible light.

Looking at it with reference to these defects, which are entirely the offspring of Roman intrigue, and not of any neglect on the part of the sculptor, it is easy to perceive that everything has been done to destroy the effect of what would otherwise have been the finest monument in St. Peter's.*

“ I have been much interested in hearing the history of Thorwaldsen's famous frieze, from the Chevalier ——, who was himself the originator of the idea. In 1809, when the French expected Napoleon to pay a visit to Rome, the government, wishing to prepare the Quirinal Palace for his reception with all befitting splendour, commissioned Thorwaldsen to furnish some sculptural ornament for one of the rooms. He chose

* This is the only work of a Protestant which has been permitted to adorn St. Peter's.

for his subject the triumphal entrance of Alexander the Great into Babylon. The work was instantly commenced, and in ninety days from the time it was ordered the frieze was designed, modelled, and cast—a rapidity which seems almost miraculous when one considers the wonderful skill of the grouping, and the immense labour required. It is two hundred feet in length, and has been copied in marble for Count Somariva's villa on the Lake of Como.

“ The Chevalier —— says he considers Thorwaldsen's Mercury as one of his finest works. The history of it, which he learned from the great sculptor himself, is not uninteresting. Thorwaldsen told him that one day, as he was taking a walk in the country, he happened to see a peasant standing under a tree, in an attitude which struck him exceedingly; he thought about

it all night, and at the first break of dawn he called for clay, and never rested till he had in two or three days completed the model of this famous statue.

“I have been deeply struck by a remark he made to this friend, after finishing his sublime statue of the Saviour. ‘I feel,’ said he, ‘that I have now attained the highest point I shall ever reach ; for this is the first statue I have felt *satisfied* with.’”

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Some waltz, some draw, some fathom the abyss
Of metaphysics ; others are content
With music ; the most moderate shine as wits ;
While others have a genius turned for fits.
But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, fine arts, or finer stays,
May be the baits for gentlemen, or lords
With regular descent, in these our days,
The last year to the new transfers its hoards,
New vestals claim men’s eyes with the same praise
Of ‘ elegant,’ et cetera, in fresh batches,
All *matchless* creatures, yet all bent on *matches*.

BYRON.

“ THURSDAY night, or rather, Friday morning.—Just returned home from a very gay ball at the Austrian ambassador’s, wearied in mind and body. Oh ! how these fatiguing amusements, these

painful pleasures, enervate the soul and debase its powers. As we drove by the convent of Santa Caterina, the bell was tolling which summons the nuns to their midnight devotions. I blushed to think how many fragile and delicate beings were disturbed from their slumbers at that unseasonable hour, to brave the chilling air of a winter's night in a cold chapel, while I, with health and strength that were bestowed on me for better purposes, was complaining of the self-imposed fatigue of an evening of gaiety and dissipation! People may say what they will, but it is nevertheless most certain that such acts of mortification and self-denial, however disagreeable to the body, are most salutary and invigorating to the mind. I am almost resolved to go to no more balls while I remain at Rome. It is a profanation of the eternal city to

spend one's time here in dancing and folly and unprofitable society, when there is so much to interest and elevate the mind, and to excite its aspirations after higher objects. I will leave these pitiful pleasures to those who can find enjoyment in them, if such there be ; and that there are such, who can doubt who sees the crowds that nightly flock to them with an ardour and perseverance worthy of a better cause.

“ Rome is absolutely overrun with English. Never since the days of Alaric has there been such a formidable inundation of barbarians from the north. So many successful matches were made up here last winter, that it has encouraged all the bedaughtered dowagers to bring their unsaleable commodities to the Roman market, which is now so completely overstocked, that, like a swarm of locusts,

they must die of the famine they have themselves created. The hackneyed charms and faded fashions of many a London season, retouched and remodelled with skill and discretion, 'come out as good as new' at Florence and Rome, to carry on the campaign with all the ardour and desperation which a forlorn hope inspires.

“ What strange ideas foreigners must conceive of us ! They, at least, are careful of the reputation of their daughters, whatever liberty they may allow their wives. The higher their rank, the more strictly are the fair Italian girls secluded from all eyes save those of their nearest relatives. They are to be sought for amid the quiet retirement of home, instead of being obtruded on the public gaze amid the glare of the crowded ball-room. With us it is just the reverse. The well-worn belle,

whose charms are become as wearisome as an oft-told tale, is at last obliged to abandon all farther speculation, and accept as a pis-aller some persevering, though oft-rejected admirer ;

‘ ——— some long pursuer,
Worn out with importunity ; or fall
To the lot of him who ne’er pursued at all.’

“ ‘ A good match !’ What hidden magic, what secret spell lies concealed in those important little words, which seem to be the ruling principle, the sole end and aim of life, with so large a proportion of the daughters of Eve !

“ On turning to Johnson’s Dictionary for an explanation, I find his definition of a match to be, ‘ one able to contest with another !’ Did the great philosopher intend this for satire ?

“ February 6.—Madame Letitia Bonaparte, the mother of Napoleon, expired

yesterday morning, in the eighty-eighth year of her age. We obtained admission to-day into the palace where she has spent the last years of her life, and where she is now lying in state. We were ushered through a long suite of rooms into a large drawing-room, where, reclining in her coffin, and supported by white satin cushions, we gazed for the first and last time upon this remarkable and interesting woman. She was attired in her usual costume, a black velvet dress and blonde cap with white ribbon, over which was thrown a rich blonde veil that hung down on each side of her face, and imparted a softening shade to the rigid contour of her features.

“ The coffin was placed upon the ground in the centre of the apartment, and surrounded by large wax tapers, which cast a strong-light upon the

corpse, leaving the rest of the room in perfect darkness. Her cheeks were slightly rouged, and on the placid but strongly-marked features there was so little appearance of death that some people said she had on a wax mask.

“ We ascertained, however, afterwards, that this was not the case. Her nose is arched and very prominent ; her countenance remarkably striking, expressive of great dignity and firmness, but yet mild and benevolent. She has been lame for the last few years in consequence of an accident ; her sight, too, has failed her latterly, and for some time past she has never left her room. To the shame of human nature, it is affirmed that her servants, availing themselves of her blind and helpless condition, used to make a practice of admitting strangers at a certain price to stare at her from a gallery

like a wild beast. However, this infamous conduct was fortunately discovered by her brother, Cardinal Fêsch, who soon put a stop to this branch of domestic commerce.

“ She is said to have left the bulk of her fortune (which is immense) to her grandson, the Prince of Mussignano, Lucien Bonaparte’s eldest son, who is devoted to the study of natural history. Before the campaign of 1815, and Napoleon’s return from Elba, Madame Letitia’s wealth was enormous, but she, as well as the rest of the Buonaparte family, suffered extremely from the loss of the large sums they advanced to furnish out that expedition.

“ It was enough to make the most thoughtless moralize, to gaze on the remains of that singular woman, who, born in a private station, was called forth from

obscurity to see her children raised to the highest pinnacle of human grandeur,—to behold one of her sons emperor of the French and master of Europe,—Joseph on the throne of Spain ; Louis on that of Holland ; Jerome, of Westphalia ; Caroline Murat, queen of Naples ; Pauline, the wife of Borghese, the Viceroy of Turin ; and Eliza, *gouvernante* of Etruria.

“ After witnessing this splendid pageant, she lived to see the modern Alexander a prisoner in the hands of the enemy he had vainly striven to crush,—to see him die a lonely exile on a barren rock, far from the scene of his grandeur and his triumphs, while her other sceptred children returned to the comparative obscurity of private life, bearing with them bitter recollections of vanished kingdoms and still sighing to be reinstated in their imaginary rights.

“ A more extraordinary life than that of this venerable lady can hardly be conceived.

“ Her latter years have been spent at Rome, surrounded by many members of her family, Cardinal Fêsch and Lucien Bonaparte having long been residing here. She is spoken of with respect and esteem by all classes, and seems to have borne her return to a private station with the same equanimity and calmness which marked all her conduct during the zenith of her eventful career.

“ Emperors, kings, and popes, will probably continue as long as the world endures, but never will there be again ‘ a mother of Napoleon.’ On her coffin is engraved, with singularly good taste, the proudly simple inscription,—

‘ Mater Napoleonis,
Ætat. 87.’

“ The palace occupied by Madame Letitia is situated in the Piazza di Venezia, at the end of the Corso. It is difficult to imagine a group of buildings in such close juxtaposition as those in this Piazza, which are calculated to call forth such a variety of emotions.

“ 1st. The magnificent pile in which repose the remains of the determined partizan of the papal see, Ignatius Loyola, the supporter of the Guelphs, and the founder of the order of the Jesuits.*

“ 2nd. The Palazzo di Venezia, now the abode of the Austrian minister, and the central point for the intrigues of the imperial or Ghibeline party.

“ 3rd. The palace of Madame Letitia Bonaparte, the mother of the mo-

* The church of Il Gesu, with the convent belonging to it, are situated in this Piazza.

dern Charlemagne, the representative of the people though their despot.

“ 4th. The palace of the Banker-Duke, Torlonia, where the daughter and grandsons of a sadler receive and entertain grandees from all quarters of the globe !

“ What food for a contemplative mind does this group of buildings afford !

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies ‘ farewell to flesh ;’
So called, because, the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh.”

BEPPPO.

“ Les festins, les bals, les belles ceremonies de la religion
se sont succédés tour à tour sans interruption. Les bals
surtout sont fort plaisans. Chaque personne met un habit
étranger, et un visage de carton par dessus le sien. On tient
sous ce déguisement des propos à faire éclater de rire.”

VOLTAIRE.

“ FEBRUARY 10.—All Rome seems to
be in a state of delirium. The usual
grave deportment and sober sedateness
of the people is exchanged for the most
extravagant gaiety and exuberant mirth.

The Corso, generally so dull and dismal, is now all in an uproar !—

‘ ————— To-day ’twas full of masks,
And lo !—the madness of the carnival !’

“ It is amusing enough to drive up and down, at a snail’s pace, in an open carriage for an hour or two, throwing lime into the eyes of all your very particular friends, and being nearly blinded yourself in return for this civility. But it is far more amusing, under the shelter of a mask and domino, to join the motley crowd on foot, and to visit any of your acquaintance whose houses happen to be in your way, whom you may safely puzzle and torment with all sorts of harmless impertinences, secured from detection by your impenetrable disguise. Amongst the most ruthless assailants of the day I observed Marshal Marmont

leaning over a balcony, and pouring down his grape-shot, with tremendous effect, upon the luckless occupants of a britschka, which was so hemmed in on all sides as to have no chance of escape. In vain did his unfortunate victims try to shake off the obnoxious missiles, and smooth down their ruffled plumes ; they were still exposed to the pitiless pelting of the storm, and had no resource but to exclaim, with King Lear,

‘ Pour on ; I will endure !’

“ A heavy shower of these confetti is often no joke, especially when the eyes come in for a share of it, as they consist chiefly of small bits of gravel covered with lime. The real bon-bons drop in occasionally, as a sort of peace-offering, to make up for the annoyance the spurious ones may have caused you. Sometimes a bunch of violets is thrown into

your carriage by some unknown friend en passant ; but before you have time to pick it up it is often snatched away again by some less friendly incognito, to be bestowed, perhaps, upon the carriage that follows you. Much merriment was raised at the expense of Madama Starke, (a personage of scarcely less notoriety at Rome than the pope himself,) by a wag, who took it into his head to personate that worthy lady, and contrived to imitate her style of dress so admirably, that one would almost suspect him of having obtained private access to her wardrobe. He had, moreover, covered himself in all directions with placards, setting forth the price of beef, mutton, and voituriers, with sundry other useful hints for travellers, interspersed with marks of admiration in due proportion.

“ The festino, a masked ball which concludes the diversions of the carnival, is well worth seeing once. It is held in a little theatre in the Via Babuino, and, considering that it is open to people of all classes, at a very low price, it is really astonishing to see what order and decorum prevail there. We took a box, in order to secure a resting-place when tired of wandering about below. The pit was raised to a level with the stage, and was thronged to suffocation by a motley crowd of dancers and walkers, performers and lookers on, many of whom were arrayed in the gayest colours and most ludicrous devices imaginable. It was really delightful to see how thoroughly the people seemed to enjoy themselves, and to be given up, heart and soul, to the harmless amusements of the evening, undisturbed by a thought or a care for the

morrow. Everybody was in costume or domino, but great numbers took off their masks, being nearly stifled by the intense heat. The dress of an English sailor seemed to be a favourite costume with the men, while the women generally shewed a decided preference for the short petticoats and gaudy colours of the Swiss. However, it must be confessed that most of the costumes were so bad that it would have puzzled a wiser head than mine to discover what they were intended to represent.

“ Some English gentlemen of our acquaintance entered our box dressed as ladies, and completely baffled all our attempts to discover who they really were. One of them had contrived to insinuate his feet into a pair of white satin shoes, and his whole air and manner were so perfectly ladylike, that had not his voice

betrayed him we should never have dreamt of doubting his pretensions.

“ By midnight everybody is turned out of the theatre, and all the lights are extinguished. So rigorously is this order enforced, that having delayed our departure a little on account of the difficulty of forcing a passage through the crowd, we found ourselves left in total darkness, and were obliged to grope our way out as we best could.

“ It is really astonishing to see how, in the midst of all this general licence and noisy buffoonery, often interspersed with practical jokes, which are never very agreeable to the sufferers themselves, not the slightest ill humour or bad feeling of any sort ever appears to break out for an instant. Every one seems to come with a full determination to be amused, and to enter cordially into the spirit of the day.

“ It is a season of universal gaiety and feasting, which, as it finds most of them poor, leaves them considerably poorer ; and their severest penance during Lent is the incessant annoyance of duns, who assail their doors with long faces and still longer bills, which have been thoughtlessly incurred during this joyous season. ‘ Domani,’ said an Italian to me on the last day of the carnival, ‘ Domani si comincia a dire che non sta in casa il Padrone ;’ i. e., that they are not at home to (a certain class of) visitors !”

“ February 12.—We witnessed rather an amusing exhibition this morning, in the shape of a play, performed by the girls who are brought up at the Conservatorio of San Michele. ‘ Guiseppe riconosciuto’ was the name and subject of the drama ; and between the acts, by way of relief, was introduced ‘ Le Cantatrici

Villani,' a sort of opera buffa, very pretty and extremely well performed, though Clara's notions of decorum were severely wounded by the appearance of some of the fair actresses in male attire. One in particular, who was dressed as a young officer, looked very handsome and captivating in her moustachios and uniform, but I must confess it rather shocked even my (not over-rigid) ideas of propriety to witness such an exhibition. True, no men were admitted into the little theatre, except the orchestra and a cardinal with his suite. The former, as an Italian lady sagaciously observed, 'are accustomed to it, and therefore it cannot signify;' and as to the latter, why, if they usurp to themselves the privilege of wearing petticoats, they cannot, in conscience, forbid the ladies to sport les culottes en revanche! Guiseppe was in prose; and a

very prosy uninteresting affair it proved ; not a little ridiculous too at times, from excess of sublimity.

“ On our way home we paid our humble tribute of admiration at the shrine of St. Cecilia, which is considered a chef d'œuvre of art. It is a recumbent statue of black marble, supposed to be an exact representation of the attitude in which the body of the saint was found after her martyrdom ; but much of the interest is lost from the circumstance of the face being entirely concealed.”

“ February 15.—From the windows of the Vatican this morning we saw the whole country on the Monte Mario side of the Tiber completely under water. The late heavy rains have so swollen the river that it has overflowed its banks, and inundated the surrounding fields and vineyards. The water is so deep in the

Via Ripetta, and some other streets near the Tiber, that the inhabitants are obliged to take a boat when they wish to go out. The Pantheon, which has a drain communicating with the Tiber, is full of water; and so is the piazza in front of it, to within a few feet of the fountain in the centre, which stands on higher ground. Such a flood has not been known for many years. It occurred to me that it might be worth while to take a look at the Pantheon in its present state by moonlight. We did so, and were indeed most amply repaid for our trouble.

“ The effect produced by the reflection of the columns in the water, upon which the moonbeams played in silvery lustre, contrasted with the dark mass of building in deep shade in the background, was extremely fine.

“ The interior of the Pantheon disap-

points me sadly ; there is a cold, unfinished, white-washed look about it, that strikes one, particularly when compared with the richness and splendour of the other great churches.

“ Here the body of Raphael was discovered beneath one of the altars, and ascertained to be his by the remains of his gold spurs, the badge of his knight-hood. I was assured by one who had seen it, that there was beauty even in the skeleton, and that he could trace in it a strong resemblance to some of the portraits that have been done of this great artist. The Pantheon was for many days thronged with people anxious to look at these interesting remains, till at last it was thought that the spirit of devotion was becoming so strong that it might chance to excite the jealousy of the surrounding saints, who were suffered to

remain unnoticed in their respective niches ; and Raphael was therefore again consigned to his tomb. The discovery of his skeleton, with the head on, was a severe mortification to the members of San Luca, who fully believed they had had his skull safe in a glass case for the last century, and had been carrying on a very profitable trade by sending casts of it to all parts of the world at an exorbitant price !

“ In the ‘ School of Athens’ there is a portrait of Raphael by himself, which very closely resembles the majority of the pictures one sees of him.”

CHAPTER XIX.

“ ————— On such a night
I stood within the Coliseum’s wall,
’Mid the chief relics of almighty Rome ;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin ; from afar
The watch-dog bayed, beyond the Tiber, and
More near, from out the Cæsar’s palace came
The owl’s long cry ; and interruptedly
Of distant sentinels, the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind :
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill’d up,
As ’twere anew, the gaps of centuries.”—MANFRED.

“ FEBRUARY 18.—I wandered this evening through the Coliseum by moonlight, and as I stood in silent rapture amid

those majestic ruins, I thought of the scenes of cruelty and agony which those sombre walls had witnessed. The dying groans of the expiring gladiator, the last faithful prayer of the bleeding martyr, and the brutal shouts of a savage mob ;—such were the sounds to which these walls had once re-echoed, now still and silent as the grave !

“ Long, long could I have lingered, with unsatiated delight, contemplating the beautiful outline of broken arches, and the tall cypresses that reared their gloomy heads against a sky of deepest azure ; while the distant mountains, robed in light, shadowy clouds, bounded the enchanting picture. But I might not stay ; condemned to hurry away from this delicious solitude to the glare of a crowded room. Oh ! it is such moments as these that refresh the weary spirit, and give it

strength and courage to toil on its dreary path through the wilderness of this work-day world ! I stood upon the spot where the cross casts its dark shadow on the smooth mossy turf, once watered with the blood of thousands of victims.

‘ All was so calm, so still in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there.’

Perchance the spirits of those martyred saints may be permitted to revisit the scene of their last agony—their stepping-stone to glory ; perchance they love to linger round that cross, the thought of which had cheered and supported them under all their sufferings.”

* * * *

“ Feb. 20.—In passing through an obscure narrow street to-day, I observed a heavy lumbering old coach, of a dark red colour, the blinds closely drawn up,

and a shabby-looking pair of long-tailed black horses completing the sombre equipage. I pointed it out to my friend C——, with whom I happened to be walking. ‘O,’ said he, ‘it is only one of the carriages of the Inquisition ; they are always painted that colour.’

“ The very name of the Inquisition conjured up a thousand horrors to my imagination, and I persecuted poor C—— with questions till I had succeeded in wringing from him all the information he was able or willing to give on that terrible subject.

“ The Inquisition, or Sant’ Ufficio, as it is always called, is an independent, supreme court. Its members receive any information that may be given against any individual ; and if, after examining the witnesses, (who are never confronted with the prisoner,) they conceive that

the accused is really guilty of the offence charged against him, they arrest him on their own warrant, confine him in the dungeons of the Inquisition,* and there try him upon the evidence they have previously received. If the accused is found guilty, and condemned to imprisonment for a certain number of years, the period of his punishment is always counted from the time of his original arrest, and not from the time of his condemnation.

“ The Sant’ Ufficio is now less active with the laity than with the clergy and monastic orders ; as regards these latter it is by no means a dead letter.

“ C—— told me that he had once had an interview with one of the inquisitors, upon some business of a private nature. In the course of conversation he ven-

* The Inquisition is situated in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Peter’s.

tured to remark that laymen in the Romish church enjoyed much less freedom of word and action than the clergy and monks.

“ ‘ You are greatly mistaken,’ replied the inquisitor, ‘ there are punishments inflicted upon ecclesiastics, when culpable, that may well strike terror into the boldest heart. Not long ago, a disturbance took place in a convent of Capuchin friars at Rome, which threatened serious consequences. The convent was immediately surrounded by the pope’s troops, and the ringleader in the revolt was seized. The rest were pardoned, but this unhappy man was doomed to be made an example of, for the benefit of the rest. A regular funeral procession was formed, the dirge for the dead was chanted by the whole fraternity, and the wretched monk was led to a vault in

the centre of the court, which had been opened for the purpose. Ropes were procured, and the trembling victim was lowered down into the terrible abyss beneath, which was then bricked up again, and he was left to all the horrors of a lingering death in that living tomb. The other monks were then marched several times round the grave of their unfortunate brother, in order the more effectually to terrify them for the future, into an unconditional submission to the will of their superiors !' ”

“ February 23.—I have been much interested in reading a little work, lately published by Monsignor Morichini, containing a memoir of a Roman mason, a man of very limited understanding, and perfectly uneducated, who established at his own expense a school for orphans, which still exists, and in which a hundred and

twenty children are brought up. This man's real name was Giovanni Borgi ; büt he was better known as Tata Giovanni. Tata, in the Roman dialect, signifies Padre. ' Per operare gran cose, a prò degli uomini, non sempre occorre avere mezzi poderosi, sublimità d'ingegno, copia di ricchezze, splendor di nascita ; basta sentir fortemente quella carità che viene ispirata dalla religione.'*

“ This is a very pleasing observation of the author's, and at the same time a very consolatory one to those whose desire of doing good appears to them to exceed their power. I fully believe that where there is an habitual and earnest desire to be of use to others, the want of

* “ In order to effect great things for the good of our fellow-creatures, it is not always necessary to possess powerful means, brilliant talents, abundant riches, or high birth ; it is sufficient that we be deeply imbued with that spirit of charity which religion alone inspires.”

means is seldom found to be an insurmountable obstacle. How often, in the midst of regrets that we cannot afford to encourage some charitable institution, are we nevertheless ready to expend double the sum required for that purpose on some useless superfluities which tend only to gratify our vanity or taste ! The founder of this school could neither read nor write ; and even in his own trade of a mason he was not considered particularly clever ; but, as Morichini justly observes, ‘ *basta aver cuore ;*’ and this mason, poor and illiterate as he was, had a benevolent heart, and was anxious to do his utmost to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures. When a man comes to die, will it give him more pleasure to think that he has collected the finest library or the choicest gallery of statues and paintings in the world, or that, like

poor Tata Giovanni, he has been the means of founding an establishment in which one hundred and twenty destitute orphans are rescued from want, vice, and ignorance, and brought up as happy and useful members of society? Such a display of true Christian charity should rouse protestants to emulate these efforts of their less-enlightened Roman-catholic brethren! Tata Giovanni died at the age of seventy, in the year 1798; and though unable to read or write, and with ninety children then depending on him alone for their daily subsistence, he left not a single debt, nor so much as one farthing in his purse.

“ The establishment was taken up after his death by Pope Pius VII., and is now maintained partly by government and partly by private contributions, under the superintendence of an ecclesiastic.

“ February 25.—A few days ago an edict was issued by the cardinal-vicar, which after complaining in a preamble of the unpunctual and careless observance of the feste or holy days, ordains that no work whatever is to be done on any ‘ festa di precetto,’ either in the city or in the country. No goods are to be brought through the gates; all the shops are to be shut; no billiards or games of any kind are to be permitted; the Jews are to transact no business, nor lend anything to the Christians. And in order to ensure obedience to this edict, a fine of twenty-five scudi (rather more than five pounds sterling) is to be levied for every offence. One fourth of this fine is to be given to the informer, ‘ che sarà tenuto occulto,’ and the remainder is to be immediately divided, by the parish priest, amongst the poor of the parish within

whose limits the offence against the law was committed.

“ Then follows a list of exceptions, in which are included the caffès, restaurants, and wine-shops ; these are allowed to be opened at certain hours, but are to remain closed during the greater part of the day. All masters of shops are required to inculcate on their journeymen the importance of going to mass, and are to give them opportunities in turn of attending the sacraments. And, finally, in order that no one may plead ignorance of this edict, all shopkeepers are ordered to buy a copy of it, and place it in their shop windows, under penalty of a heavy fine.

“ Quanto è bello tutto questo ! But the Romans have had their own way far too much, and for too long a time, to be induced to change their mode of proce-

dure merely by a simple edict. No sooner was the obnoxious order generally diffused throughout the city, than the frequenters of wine-shops and other worthies set their faces strenuously against it, and according to the usual custom at Rome in such cases, they determined effectually to impede its execution. Accordingly, a great deal of grumbling and a slight tumult took place in the Trastevere, and the pope becoming alarmed, sent for the vicar, and asked him how he could think of doing such a thing. The vicar, in reply, threw the blame on his holiness; and at last they both agreed, according to Roman custom, that as the people seemed determined to resist, the best way was to let the matter drop! The government printer was ordered to issue no more of the offensive edicts, and it is generally supposed that the ‘feste di

precetto' will be allowed to remain unhallowed for the future, or observed only so far as each man's conscience or inclination may dictate.

“ Such is this extraordinary place ! The government is perfectly arbitrary, and no man's personal liberty is secure ; yet as a mass, the people of Rome enjoy the most absolute impunity, and if a law does not happen to please them, they trample on it with undisguised contempt.

“ I obtained a copy of this ill-fated edict from a shopkeeper, who, in obedience to the order, had placed it in his window. He said it was very hard upon him to be obliged to buy it at the government printing-office, and pay a paolo for one single sheet, when he (being a bookseller) could print it himself for a baiocco. ‘ Ladri ed assassini che sono,’—he coolly observed, and then went on to abuse the

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government for not letting him publish some notices of Napoleon at St. Helena, in which he said there was nothing at all that could possibly give offence either to church or state. This shews something of the present feelings of the people !

“ It is a common saying at Rome, ‘ Gli editti durano trè giorni.’ One came out some time ago, forbidding all persons to put flower-pots outside their windows, as they endangered the skulls of the passengers. An old wag immediately removed every one from his window, saying ‘ Bisogna aver rispetto al governo.’ On the third morning, however, his flower-pots were all seen in their usual place again. When asked the meaning of this conduct, he replied—‘ Che vuole? son passat ii due giorni—ecco adesso il terzo. Tre giorni vale un Editto Romano, e non dura mai più!’ ”

CHAPTER XX.

“ I’ll love him as my brother,
And such a welcome as I’d give to him
After long absence, such is yours.”

CYMBELINE.

“ But passion most dissembles, yet betrays
E’en by its darkness ; as the blackest sky
Foretels the heaviest tempest ; it displays
Its workings through the vainly guarded eye.
Coldness or anger, e’en disdain or hate,
Are masks it often wears,—and still too late.”

BYRON.

“ MARCH 10.—Spent a solitary morning in the gardens of the Villa Pamfili Doria. Nothing could be more surpassingly lovely ! The air was perfumed with the odour of the violets, which literally empurple the ground ; all nature seemed

to be rejoicing in the freshness of returning spring; and as I wandered about, undisturbed by a voice or a footstep, amid the superb pines that crown this delightful domain, my thoughts turned to those who are far dearer to me than aught on earth beside, and who will soon, I trust, give new life to all my enjoyments by sharing them with me.

“ Edith’s last letter, dated Genoa, speaks of their being here by the middle of this month. She says Arthur is in such a hurry to get to Rome that he will not stop to let her see any thing en passant, his sole object being to arrive at his journey’s end. He adds a few lines in a postscript, which, I fancy, was not shewn to Edith, and amongst various other pretty things he says, ‘ You cannot imagine with what delight I look forward to a renewal of our intercourse. Those

happy days at Venice and Florence can never be forgotten. May I not venture to hope that you, too, sometimes think of them with pleasure? I rejoice in the thought that Edith enjoys the privilege of your friendship. Your society will be of the utmost advantage to her, and you cannot possibly do me a greater kindness than by trying to make her in all things like yourself. The more she resembles you, the nearer will she approach to perfection in my estimation.'

“ Is it a foolish feeling of vanity that leads me to transcribe this passage before I destroy the letter? I remember the time when I proudly fancied myself proof against such weakness; but oh! with what widely different feelings do we receive the flatteries of those who are indifferent to us and the praises of those whom we esteem! One word—nay, one

approving look from Arthur De Vere, were worth more, far more to me, than the admiration of the whole world beside. How I long, and yet dread to meet him again!—Yet why should I dread it? He knows not that I ever felt a warmer interest for him than was the natural result of my friendship for Edith. She has always been as a sister to me, and why should I not love him as a brother? Now that he is another's, all danger is at an end as far as my heart is concerned, and I may safely yield myself to the enjoyment of his friendship, which will henceforth be my greatest happiness. How often have I sighed in vain for the dear privilege of a brother's affection—that purest, strongest, and holiest of kindred bonds—all, tenderness and protection on one side, repaid by the deepest devotion and gratitude on the other.

Oh ! how I should have gloried in such a brother as Arthur De Vere—so noble-minded, so generous, and endowed with feelings so susceptible and so enthusiastic. How I should have doted on him—alas ! perhaps too fondly, for I could not have borne that he should ever love another better than me.

“ In a few more days I shall have seen him ! How I wish the first meeting were over ! But this is foolish, childish weakness ; I must overcome it if I value my own peace of mind.”

* * * *

“ March 15.—I have seen him. The dreaded meeting is over ; and now that it is past I cannot help wondering why I dreaded it so much. He was so calm, so collected—I had almost said, so cold—that any emotion I might have felt was checked and chilled, and all the joy and

delight was on poor Edith's side. Dear, warm-hearted girl! she clasped me in her arms as if she would never let me tear myself away from her, and declared she had never known perfect happiness till that moment, having always felt that something was wanting to complete it, while separated from me.

“ But I cannot help brooding over Arthur's coldness. How different was his manner when we parted—how tender, how thrilling, his last farewell! And yet had I been a perfect stranger he could hardly have met me with more indifference than he did to-day.

“ Strange, incomprehensible creature that he is! Perhaps, after all, this coldness was only assumed, in order to conceal far different feelings. It must be so—I cannot be totally indifferent to him, or he could not have written to me as he

did from Genoa. And yet what right have I to suppose that he cares for me except as the chosen friend of his Edith? How dare I imagine for a moment that he has a regard for me, except for her sake? Oh! these torturing thoughts—how they bewilder and perplex me! I know, I feel that he is acting honourably in repressing any warmer sentiments he might once have felt towards me; and yet, inconsistent creature that I am, I cannot help repining at his indifference, and wishing that he had shewn more kindness.”

“ March 18.—The exquisite loveliness of this brilliant spring morning induced me to propose a ride to the shores of the Mediterranean, and as Edith seemed afraid of venturing upon a Roman hack, I lent her my Khaled, and determined to put up myself with anything I could get.

“ Just beyond the Porta San Paolo we overtook a large party of equestrians, who were also bound for Ostia, and as we knew nothing of our road we were not sorry to put ourselves under their guidance. How it happened I cannot exactly tell, but Arthur and I fell into such an interesting conversation about Venice and those happy days, that we gradually slackened our pace, and soon forgot everything but each other, till, on entering a thick wood, we found ourselves deserted by all our party, and totally at a loss how to proceed. However, we determined to carve out a path for ourselves, and leaving on our right a pretty little village with a picturesque round tower, we galloped across a fine piece of green sward, and struck boldly into the depths of the Laurentine wood—

‘ No thought had we of ills to come.’

“ We followed one track after another, directing our course by the sun, till the wood became so thick, and the paths so entangled, that Arthur was obliged to dismount, and lead my horse and his own through the thicket, breaking down branches and brambles to open a passage. Every now and then the shadow of a wild boar whetting his tremendous tusks, and glaring fiercely at us through his small, deep-set eyes, flitted fearfully across my imagination ; and fortunate was it for us that the grim reality flitted not across our path, or we should never have returned home to recount our adventures.

“ We passed on in this way for nearly two hours, till at last we came to a tremendous fence, which cut off our advance most effectually ; but as the country looked more open on the other side, Arthur quietly bade me hold his horse,

while he set to work most vigorously to break up the fence, not without due caution, however, lest the noise should bring down upon us some ferocious, half-savage woodman, knife in hand, to avenge the demolition of his outworks. After half an hour's hard labour we succeeded in opening a passage, and rode in triumph through the breach into a fine open forest, full of cattle, and literally carpeted with daffodils, whose bright yellow blossoms formed a brilliant contrast to the deep dark-green of the woods. We had not proceeded far before we met a forester, who directed us to the 'Palazzo del Principe,' as he called an old square hunting-lodge of the Chigi family, flanked by four turrets, and placed on an open spot, which seemed to have been cleared out in the midst of the forest. Here we found two very civilized savages, natives

of Gaeta, who gave us some most excellent wine from the island of Santa Catarina, with delicious white bread and fresh eggs. We entrusted our steeds to the care of one of them, while the other cooked our eggs ; and seated on some logs of wood, beneath the bright blue sky, and in the midst of the lovely forest, we passed a delightful hour in congratulating ourselves upon the fortunate accident which made us lose both our road and our party at the same time.

“ It is curious to observe how, in a scene such as this, nature asserts her superiority over the works of man ; and how, even the mind most easily led away by the glitter and tinsel of the world, will, in such moments of calm reflection, form a thousand fond dreams of solitude and retirement and fancied happiness,—all, alas ! too soon disturbed and put to flight

by renewed contact with the world, just as were our lucubrations by the sudden re-appearance of our party.

“ A most unwelcome sight it was, except indeed on poor Edith’s account, who had been under great anxiety for us, and seemed rather annoyed at our desertion, which I fancy she attributed less to chance than design. Having persuaded her to share our luncheon, we all set off again, not a little refreshed and exhilarated by that sumptuous repast, and the ‘ vino divino’ which crowned it. We cantered down a beautiful avenue in front of the ‘ Palazzo,’ and in less than a mile we found ourselves on the shores of the Mediterranean. At our feet lay the lovely sea, sparkling in the sunbeams ; the overhanging woods dipped their branches in its limpid waves, and on the beach were several large fishing-boats, with nets

spread out to dry. A group of fishermen, in the picturesque costume one always sees in Neapolitan pictures, were busily engaged pulling in a net, which seemed to be at an immense distance out at sea. It was indeed a charming scene, but a scene to be felt rather than described.

“ After lingering for some time on the beach, talking to the fishermen, and inhaling the pure sea breezes, we rode back by a different path through groves of evergreens, and turning off to the left we soon reached Ostia. This is a miserable looking place, surrounded by salt marshes on all sides, except on that of the sea; and from the squalid appearance of the inhabitants one would imagine it to be sufficiently unwholesome.

“ On our way home we again fell behind the rest of the party, feeling now perfectly independent of their guidance.

Edith joined us, and a most delicious ride we had. The moon shone brightly as we entered Rome, and passed by the ruins of the Forum ; and if at such a moment I found time for a regret, it was that I had not gazed on that scene for the first time on such a night as this, when all the modern drawbacks of dirt and rubbish and squalid misery are concealed, and you pass on, amid a stillness deep as that of the grave, through these noble fragments of the glories of ancient Rome, softened and mellowed by the pale moonlight, which sheds a halo over all around, investing it with a solemn grandeur, a sober sadness, far better suited to such a scene than the bright garish light of day.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
There rose a Carlo Dolce, or a Titian,
Or wilder groupe of savage Salvatore’s.

* * * * *

Here, sweetly spread, a landscape of Lorraine ;
There, Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio’s gloomier stain
Bronzed o’er some lean and stoic anchorite.”

BYRON.

“ MARCH 20.—Took Arthur and Edith to my favourite galleries, the Sciarra and Doria, where we spent a most delightful morning, though I must confess I think I acted unwisely in thus lavishing all my treasures upon them at once.

“ I am more than ever convinced that

one gallery is enough for one morning's enjoyment : the eye becomes fatigued and the mind confused by such a mass of pictures as we have seen to-day, and it is difficult to carry away a distinct recollection of any one in particular. Were I permitted to choose one, and only one, out of all the treasures that the Roman palaces contain, I should certainly give the preference to Guido's exquisite 'Maddelena Penitente' in the Palazzo Sciarra. Totally unlike the rest of her rosy, bright-eyed sisterhood, whose voluptuous aspect savours little of protracted fasts and painful vigils, the Magdalen of Guido's refined conception is the very perfection of deep, unobtrusive, soul-felt grief. In the sorrowful, yet ardent gaze of her upturned eye, faith seems to struggle with despair ; earth, with all its fleeting joys and delusive pleasures, seems banished

from that chastened mind ; her only trust, the cross,—her only hope, forgiveness.

“ This lovely picture is in the last room of the gallery, which is indeed a cabinet of gems ; for it contains, amongst many other treasures, Leonardo da Vinci’s ‘Modesty and Vanity,’ Raphael’s ‘Violin-player,’ and Caravaggio’s ‘Gamblers.’

“ Two landscapes by Paul Brill, in another room, which are generally much admired, appear to me very cold and dingy ; a sort of bluish-green tint casts a sickly shade over everything, and forms a strong contrast to the warm glow and brilliant colouring of two Claudes which are placed close to them. In this room there is also a most ludicrous landscape by Breughel, all blue—bright true blue as Tory heart could desire ; with a little aperture in the sky, through which a venerable-looking angel is peeping, his

elbows resting comfortably on a very substantial cloud.

“ Amongst the rich gems of the Doria palace, independently of its celebrated Claudes, I delight most to gaze on that charming portrait of Giovanna di Napoli, by Leonardo da Vinci. It is the only *smiling* portrait I have ever seen whose expression has thoroughly satisfied me. It is very rare to find a half-open mouth that does not convey a certain idea of imbecility or vacuity; but here the ‘dolce sorriso’ is exquisitely blended with the ‘bell’ ingegno’—it is the mind breathing through the parted lips. Perhaps the deep interest I have always felt for this captivating but unfortunate princess, invests her portrait with a charm in my eyes beyond its intrinsic merit. I know not if it be so; but I have been much disappointed in finding no one who could

fully sympathize in the profound admiration with which I have always regarded it.

“ On our way home we called at Gibson’s studio. He has just completed his statue of Huskisson, which is one of the finest specimens of modern art. It reminds me forcibly of the Demosthenes of the Vatican, in the dignity and imposing calmness of the attitude. One cannot but feel proud to think that it is the work of an Englishman. Gibson says he should like much to see it safely deposited in the little chapel that has been built for it at Liverpool ; but he has been absent from England too long to wish to live there again. And indeed, Rome, as he justly observed, is a place possessing advantages for an artist superior to all others. It is true that the finest statues of the Vatican may be seen in London, in casts ; but at

Rome there are so many clever men congregated together, that the artist lives in the midst of a multitude of practical critics, and has his own ideas constantly corrected or improved by communication with those of others. The true feeling of real genius, superior to the paltry jealousy of inferior minds, appears to influence all the first sculptors in Rome. Gibson told me he never proceeded far with any work without getting Thorwaldsen to assist him with his advice and criticism, which was always as cordially received as it was freely given.

“ There is a most striking difference between those men whose native genius has raised them into fame, and those whom patronage (the favourite proof of talent to the indiscriminating mass in England) has lifted out of their natural obscurity.

“ A curious, and I trust singular, instance of the latter description appeared here not long ago. Ridiculous as it may seem, I was told by credible authority that he boasted of having carefully abstained from ever entering the studio of a brother sculptor, or even the Vatican itself, lest his originality of style should thereby be destroyed ! Heaven help him poor man, and send him safe home again, with all his *original* sins and perpetrations uncontaminated by the breath of Roman genius ! ”

“ March 21.—I cannot resist the temptation of an idle hour to describe the extraordinary scene I witnessed this morning, though, after all, my pen can give but a very inadequate idea of the effect produced by the sort of serio-comic solemnity with which this truly Italian exhibition was conducted.

“As we were walking through the Corso our attention was attracted by a drummer, who, perched upon a table, was mercilessly cudgelling his unharmonious instrument, in front of a small room, close to the Sciarra Palace, which is generally used as a shop. Upon inquiry we found that an exhibition of waxwork figures, from sacred history, was going on there; and (the price of admission being only three halfpence!) we determined to gratify our curiosity. The little room was as full as it could hold, and exhibited a curious medley of shopkeepers, chasseurs, and contadini; for this being a festa, or holiday, everybody was enjoying themselves, in spite of the cardinal vicar and his edict. Exactly opposite the door by which we entered were three little semi-circular apertures in the wall, with curtains closely drawn over them, and a girl, who acted

as show-woman, and seemed to have her lesson at her fingers' ends, stood ready to describe each scene as it was displayed to our wondering eyes.

“ The first scene was laid in the Garden of Gethsemane. The puppets were about a foot in height, and they all moved their eyes, arms, and legs with surprising agility. Judas was here represented in the act of coming up to Christ and kissing him, while Peter with his sword cut off the ear of Malchus, who fell backwards as if stunned by the blow.

“ Several other scenes followed, all relating to our Saviour's sufferings and crucifixion, and concluding with his resurrection. A tomb surrounded by guards was here represented, out of which, to the shrill squeaking of a small bird-organ, a figure like one of Perugino's

stiffest productions was seen slowly to emerge and mount upwards, till it disappeared from our sight. The guards soon began to awake, rub their eyes, and look about them ; and amidst the general consternation that ensued, a little cherub appeared aloft in air, dangling from the end of a piece of wire, and informed them of what had taken place during their peaceful slumbers.

“ During these representations, the most perfect gravity of demeanour prevailed amongst the spectators ; and what still more surprised and puzzled me was, the facility and self-possession with which the little she-showman chattered away with her descriptions, employing in them almost exclusively the precise language of scripture.

“ Besides this sketch of our Saviour’s passion, there were ranged round the

room various figures about forty inches high. The first of these groupes consisted of Joseph in a smock frock, and the merchant with the money in his hand, which he is offering to Levi ; while Reuben, on the other side, stands utterly downcast at the cruelty of his brethren. Joseph, overcome by their injustice, after evincing the struggle within his bosom by various muscular movements and contortions, bursts into tears,—‘Proruppe in dirotissimo pianto,’ as the girl observed while she applied a handkerchief to his eyes, one of which was nearly obliterated by these perpetual guttæ serenæ.

“ On the other side of the room stood Pharaoh’s daughter, in gala attire, by the bulrush cradle of the infant Moses, who wagged his arms and legs, and squeaked like a young kitten, while his

history was being related for our edification.

“ Another group consisted of Judith with the head of Holophernes in her hand, rolling her eyes about in the most fearful manner, while the quivering head opened its ghastly mouth and eyes to admiration. The bleeding trunk lay close beside her on a bed.

“ During that part of this singular performance which related to the Saviour, a decent solemnity of manner prevailed throughout the room ; but the extreme absurdity of the rest of the exhibition was irresistibly ludicrous, and afforded much merriment to all the assembly.

“ The Roman government, it appears, leaves its subjects at liberty to exhibit the most ridiculous, if not blasphemous representations of the Deity, and to burlesque on the public stage or in puppet-

shows any portion of scripture history that may happen to strike their fancy ; but let them venture to introduce upon the scene the very meanest priestling or barefooted mendicant friar, and the offenders will soon be made to feel that, however trifling a thing it may be to turn their God into ridicule, they are guilty of a mortal offence if they presume to take the same liberties with the humblest minion of his holiness the pope.”

CHAPTER XXII.

“ On a souvent parlé des cérémonies de la semaine sainte à Rome. Il est naturel qu’elles attirent vivement la curiosité; mais l’attente n’est pas également satisfaite par les cérémonies proprement dites. Le dîner des douze apôtres servi par le pape, leurs pieds lavés par lui, enfin, les diverses coutumes de ces temps solennels, rappellent toutes des idées touchantes; mais mille circonstances inévitables nuisent souvent à l’intérêt et à la dignité de ce spectacle.”

MAD. DE STAEL.

“ EASTER SUNDAY.—At last this eventful week of fatiguing excitement and painful pleasure is past and gone, leaving only a confused remembrance of sights and ceremonies, chantings and washings, all of which occasioned infinite toil and trouble, and generally ended

in disappointment. On Wednesday I repaired to the Sistine chapel in all the eagerness of high-wrought expectation ; and after sitting in patient endurance for three long, tedious hours, nearly suffocated by the intense heat, and watching with anxious interest the slow extinction one by one of the fifteen mysterious tapers, which represent, I believe, the twelve apostles and the three Maries, I was at last rewarded by the long-expected and far-famed Miserere. Solemn and magnificent it certainly is ; but I had unfortunately heard such exaggerated descriptions of its overpowering effects, that I felt disappointed on finding that it affected my own mind so much less powerfully than I had anticipated. Perhaps the heat and fatigue I had undergone rendered me incapable of enjoying it as much as I might otherwise have done ;

but certain it is, that the usual mass in the Gregorian chapel every Sunday afternoon affects my feelings far more sensibly, and affords me more exquisite gratification.

“ The very circumstance of being thus brought in contact with the unfeeling selfishness, the provoking incivility, of an English crowd, each jostling, and pushing, and pressing forward to secure the best place, totally regardless of the inconvenience they may occasion to those around them, is certainly by no means conducive to the exciting of a calm and devotional spirit,—the only frame of mind in which one can properly enter into and appreciate the sad and solemn music of Allegri’s Miserere.

“ Does it not make one blush for one’s country-women, to see them act with the gross disregard of all propriety and de-

corum which too often sets a distinguishing mark upon them in places of public worship on the Continent? They seem to forget that though *they* only come to stare, others come to pray; and that while they are intent solely upon their own selfish gratification and amusement, they too often disturb the devotions of those who are worshipping the same Being whom they themselves profess to adore, even while they scruple not to profane his temple by levity of conduct and frivolous conversation!

“ It is a general rule that all ladies who are admitted into the Sistine chapel must be dressed in black, and wear veils over their heads instead of bonnets. Now it might be supposed that such a regulation would entirely prevent those exhibitions of dress and finery which usually characterize an assemblage of

English-women. But no; the ruling passion surmounts all obstacles, and strange as it may seem, there were ladies present who even availed themselves of this regulation to appear in a sort of Spanish costume, admirably adapted for effect, but better suited for a fancy ball-room than a chapel.

* * * *

“ The washing and feasting of the pilgrims on Holy Thursday seemed to me a most uninteresting exhibition. I was told that the washing was a mere form, as they had all undergone a private discipline of soap and water, preparatory to their public ablutions; but the same thing could hardly be said of the feasting, or these pilgrims must indeed be endowed with no ordinary capacities. Whatever the lavanda may be, the tavola is assuredly no idle ceremony.

“ The benediction this morning, (Easter day) is the only thing really worth seeing, of all the vaunted sights and ceremonies of the Holy Week.

“ It is indeed an unique and most impressive scene; a scene which, once witnessed, can never be forgotten. The whole of the immense piazza in front of St. Peter's was crowded with carriages of every description, troops of cavalry, detachments of infantry, and a variegated mob of cittadini and contadini, in full gala costume. For more than an hour we waited patiently in our carriage, amid the din of drums and bells, and the ceaseless hum of thousands of human voices, varied sometimes by the deep, stirring sounds of a fine military band.

“ During this time, high mass was going on in St. Peter's; but had we attempted to witness that ceremony, we

should infallibly have lost the interesting sight that followed.

“ As soon as the pope appeared in the loggia, or balcony, over the principal door of St. Peter’s, all was hushed in a moment, and the confused din that had hitherto prevailed was succeeded by a death-like stillness. Not a sound was heard, scarcely a breath was drawn, while that solemn benediction was pronounced, and the venerable old man raised his arms, and invoked blessings upon that vast multitude devoutly kneeling before him.

“ The guns of St. Angelo announced the termination of that imposing ceremony ; a shower of indulgences fell from the loggia, the drums thundered and the bells pealed with redoubled vigour, and everybody set about returning home as fast as the crowd would permit. For

the first time, I confess I was not disappointed, but would gladly renew this beautiful and interesting sight every year, were I to spend the rest of my life at Rome.

“ April 2.—I have long felt a great curiosity to see the subterranean chapels under St. Peter’s—the Grotte Vaticane, as they are called ; but I was informed that they are only open to the public on two days in the year ; one day for women alone, and the other for men. However, thanks to the indefatigable kindness of our zealous friend C——, we obtained permission to see these interesting remains, and the greater part of this morning has been devoted to them. We descended by a small, low door, and a flight of narrow stone steps under the cupola, which conducted us into the original basilica of St. Peter’s, the scene of the earliest

Christian worship. It is said to have been built by the Emperor Constantine, over the burial ground of the Christian martyrs who suffered in the early persecutions. The pavement, which has been well preserved, is composed of curiously inlaid marble, and the walls are adorned with the harsh and clumsy mosaics of the earliest ages, upon a groundwork of gold, very similar to those which line the walls of St. Mark's, at Venice. The shrines of the apostles and other saints are richly ornamented with bas-reliefs in bronze and marble, according to the rude and grotesque fashion of those times, intended to represent the miracles they performed, and the principal events that marked their lives.

“ Several deposed or abdicated princes have found a last resting-place in these vaults, and amongst them I saw the

tombs of our three unknown kings, James III., Charles III., and Henry IX., with all their imaginary titles displayed at full length. There was something sad and affecting in seeing the remains of the last of the unfortunate house of Stuart thus consigned to a dismal vault, an unseen, unhonoured tomb, in a foreign country, far from the land where their ancestors reigned, and indebted to the charity of strangers even for a grave !

“ Here also reposes Adrian IV., the only English pope, if we except Pope Joan,—who was said to be a native of Dunstable, and to have worn the tiara under the name of John VIII. However, the existence of this epicene pontiff seems somewhat apocryphal, and is, at any rate, shrouded in that mystery which sheds a sort of interest over the most trifling and unimportant subject.

“ The extreme lowness of these vaults, the pavement of which is scarcely eleven feet below the floor of St. Peter’s, and the want of a proper circulation of air, render them so disagreeably close and oppressive that we were not sorry to re-ascend into the magnificent and comparatively boundless regions of the noble edifice above.

“ The subterranean church is perfectly dark, and we were each furnished with a taper on entering it; but on those days on which it is opened to the public it is lighted up for the occasion.

“ We loitered away the rest of the morning in the Vatican very pleasantly, and I hope not altogether unprofitably. Our attention was chiefly devoted to Raphael’s frescos, which, injured as they are by time, are still wonderfully fine. I was most struck by the School of Athens

and the Appearance of the Angel to St. Peter in prison. They are all more or less defaced, and when one contemplates the deplorable condition not only of these splendid works of art, but of his own Last Judgment, in the Sistine chapel, one cannot but rejoice that all the great artists did not adopt Michael Angelo's opinion, that 'oil-painting was only fit for women and children.' Had all the famous masters painted only in fresco, which he considered the proper style for a man, how imperfect an idea should we now be able to form of their works. Compare the colours of Raphael's Transfiguration with those of his School of Athens ;—the one as fresh as ever ; the other, alas, how faded and perished !

“ The really enduring style is the Vatican mosaic. The copy of the Transfiguration in mosaic which adorns St. Peter's

is indeed a wonderful performance, and may probably long survive the original picture, of which it so well imitates the richness and depth of colouring. One great advantage of this curious and valuable art is, that not even fire itself can destroy it. This is satisfactorily proved by the fragments that have survived the tremendous conflagration of the church of San Paolo, and which are some of the rudest and earliest specimens of the art.

“ There are twenty-nine of these mosaic pictures in St. Peter's, of which the best is said to be the Martyrdom of St. Petronilla, copied from the original painting by Guercino.

“ The building in which this work is carried on is close to the Vatican, and the manufacture itself is entirely in the hands of government.

“ We obtained permission to see it, and

were conducted through long suites of rooms lined with shelves containing pieces of smalta, of every shade and tint that could be required in painting. This smalta is a hard substance, composed of glass and metal, and is made on purpose for the mosaic work. I was told that when Urban VIII. first conceived the idea of copying pictures in mosaic, he used pieces of various coloured marbles for the purpose, like the ancient *pietra-dura* work at Florence ; but it was found that the gloss upon the marble tended greatly to destroy the effect, added to which it would be impossible to obtain in marble all those innumerable tints and delicate gradations of colour which are required in copying a painting.

“ I asked one of the artificers how the pope managed to dispose of the produce of his mosaic manufactory ? He replied,

that his holiness sometimes made presents of these pictures to different sovereigns, but that the number executed was probably far less than I imagined, as it takes many years to complete one single picture of any magnitude.”

END OF VOL. I.

DIARY OF A NUN.

VOL. II.

DIARY OF A NUN.

**" Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love."**

SHAKESPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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DIARY OF A NUN.

CHAPTER I.

“ ’Tis time, I feel, to leave thee now,
While yet my soul is something free,
While yet those dangerous eyes allow
One moment’s thought to stray from thee.”

MOORE.

“ Ah, questo loco.
Lasciar io deggio ; di lui pieno è troppo !”

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

“ APRIL 4.—The Temples have just received a letter from home, recalling them to England immediately. The case is urgent and admits of no delay, so we are to leave Rome on the 8th. It would be the height of selfishness in me to add to their distress by speaking of my own

disappointment. I thought of this, and said nothing, though my heart was well nigh bursting. It is the more difficult for me to bear this trial, as it is in a great measure self-imposed. I have only to speak the word, and I might remain here as long as I please, with the De Veres ; but alas, my heart tells me that it is a temptation to which I ought not to expose myself.

“ The painful experience of the last three weeks proves to me only too clearly the folly of ever supposing it possible that I could be continually in Arthur’s society, and yet steel my heart against its dangerous fascination.

“ When Edith, with all the earnestness and simplicity of confiding affection, pressed me to stay with her as long as she remained in Italy, I refused firmly and positively, nor could all her en-

treaties wring from me the remotest hint as to the reason of my refusal.

“ She seemed quite vexed, and half inclined to be angry with me, little dreaming, dear, kind-hearted girl, that I was trying to ensure her happiness at the expense of my own. Arthur stood by, without saying one word, and very soon left the room, giving me as he passed such a glance as seemed to penetrate my inmost soul. It was just as if he divined my reason for refusing Edith’s offer, and forbore to add to my difficulties by pressing the point himself. I feel that I have acted rightly. I have at least the support of an approving conscience, but Heaven only knows what this sacrifice has cost me.

“ April 7.—My fate is decided. In spite of my resolutions and my struggles, I am overcome. I have fallen—fallen, oh how grievously, in my own estimation !

“ I deserve it, for I was too proud, too confident in my own powers of resistance. I trusted to the strength of those lofty principles which I thought could never fail me ; but I was leaning on a broken reed. Alas ! I knew not how hard, how very hard a trial I should have to endure. I knew not how irresistible are the persuasive accents of a beloved voice, seconded by the fond pleadings of a yielding heart. It was but last night I congratulated myself on my firmness, and thought that in two days more the struggle would be at an end. And it is ended—but how ? I have sacrificed honour, friendship, everything, to my own weak, womanish heart ; and oh, how I despise myself for it !

“ The loveliness of the morning tempted me to take an early ramble along my favourite walk on the banks of the Tiber.

I thought it was probably the last I should ever enjoy there; and a thousand memories of past days, with all their joys and sorrows, rushed upon my mind. I sat down upon the grass, and wept bitterly as I gazed upon the gilded dome of St. Peter's, sparkling in the bright sunshine, and thought of all the hours of deep and thrilling excitement I had passed within those marble walls. An overwhelming sense of desolation and friendlessness came over me. I had never loved but *one*; that one was dearer far than life itself to me; for oh, what would the whole world be to me without *him*! but one vast void—one dreary blank. I had once been content to live alone on this cold earth—to lock up my feelings in their secret cells—to conceal every thought from the heartless multitude around me—to consider sympathy a delusion, and love a dream.

“ Oh, Arthur, why did you undeceive me? Why did you teach me that life without love is worthless, and yet that to love is a crime?

“ To return to England desolate, alone in heart and soul—to pine away the remainder of my life in hopeless misery, and bitter recollections of bygone days,—this was the fate that awaited me. I buried my face in my hands, and groaned aloud, for my spirit writhed beneath the contemplation of such utter wretchedness.

“ ‘ Miss Aylmer—Gertrude,’ gently whispered that voice which alone has power to soothe me.

“ I started up. It was Arthur himself. Did he indeed divine the subject of my thoughts—the cause of my tears? I felt conscious that he did; but I could not bear that he should see my weakness. I told him I was taking a last look at my favourite scene, and that it was a painful

thing to say farewell even to the sluggish Tiber and its muddy banks.

“ I felt awkward and uncomfortable, and made matters still worse by a vain attempt to laugh it off. Arthur had appeared hurt at my refusing to remain with them, and his manner during the last three days had been almost as cold and haughty as when I first knew him. I feel sure *now* that he could not have suspected the real reason of my refusal, or his noble mind would have appreciated the sacrifice ; and I—how could I endure that he should read my inmost heart ? He feels that we are congenial spirits—that we are linked together in soul by a chain of secret sympathy ; but of love he would never dream. His solemn vows are Edith’s — his friendship is all he has to offer *me*. I must do him the justice to believe that he has no

idea of the state of my feelings, or he never could have pressed me as he did to become an inmate of his house. He said Edith would be miserable without me—that she was such an artless, unsophisticated creature, and so entirely ignorant of life, that a friend on whose judgment and kindness she could confide was quite essential to her happiness. In short, he pleaded his cause so powerfully and effectually as to wring from my lips a consent, for which my conscience upbraided me even while I uttered it ; and after sauntering up and down those sunny banks for more than two hours, he returned with me to the Piazza di Spagna, where we found Edith just setting off to call upon me. I fancied she looked scarcely so well pleased as I had expected, when Arthur told her that he had succeeded in overcoming all my

objections, and that I had promised to remain with them.

“ She was piqued by the success of his arguments when hers had failed to persuade me, and coldly replied, that could she have divined the power of Arthur’s eloquence she might have spared herself the trouble of exerting her own in vain. Poor Edith ! Arthur darted one of his tremendous glances at her, beneath which her gentle spirit seemed to quail, and the tears stood in her soft blue eyes. I took her hand in mine, and assured her that my only reason for ever refusing her kind offer was the conviction I felt that the intrusion of a third person would be a sad drawback to the happiness of their tête-à-tête, and that though she might be willing to submit to the annoyance, I did not think it fair to inflict it upon her husband ; but being now convinced from

his own lips that my scruples were wholly unfounded, I could no longer persist in maintaining them.

“ She appeared satisfied with this explanation, and proposed accompanying me home to settle matters with the Temples, who, as I fully anticipated, were not a little provoked at my capricious conduct. However, I believe I have satisfactorily disarmed their resentment, by a cheque on Torlonia for my own share of the expenses of the journey to England. Indeed, I could not, in common justice, do less, as they had consented to extend their tour as far as Rome entirely on my account. It is not often that I throw away money on whims and caprices ; so I think I am justified in gratifying myself for once.

“ Would that I could feel equally justified in all that I have done this day !

“ But it is too late now to repent of my weakness. It only remains for me to avert any evil consequences that might ensue from it, by the most guarded conduct and rigorous self-command.”

“ April 8.—The Temples left Rome, early this morning, and I am now domiciliated under the same roof with Edith and Arthur.

“ God grant I may never be so basely ungrateful as to give them cause to regret their kindness and hospitality. I should indeed despise and detest myself if I thought I could ever be so vile ! Dear, generous Edith, my earliest and constant friend, forgive me if I have ever caused you a moment’s pain, or ill requited your gentle affection.

“ I love you as a sister, fondly and tenderly, and Arthur shall henceforth be to me as a brother—and nothing more !

“Yes ; I may surely be permitted to love him with that pure and holy love, and to enjoy that delightful interchange of thought—that mysterious sympathy of soul, which kindred spirits alone can know !”

CHAPTER II.

“It is not noon ; the sunbow’s rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver’s waving column
O’er the crag’s headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along.”

MANFRED.

“Adieu, terre des souvenirs, s’écria-t-elle ; adieu, séjour
où la vie ne dépend, ni de la société, ni des événemens, ou
l’enthousiasme se ranime par les regards, et par l’union in-
time de l’âme avec les objets extérieurs.”

CORINNE.

“APRIL 12.—How luxuriously indo-
lent these soft, balmy days make one
feel ! There is something indescribably
soothing in the perfect repose, the deli-
cious languor of these spring mornings,
when to wander alone beneath this sky

of deepest blue, to inhale the fragrance of the violet-spangled turf, and to gaze upon the vast Campagna's trackless waste, bathed in one rich flood of brightest sunshine, is all that is necessary to existence. If ever I felt that I could dispense with happiness—that I could bear to look upon my lonely lot without a murmur—it would be in Italy. And yet—strange, inconsistent heart of mine—do not these charms owe half their fascination to that very sympathy which, for the first time in my solitary life, has here shed its own bright halo on all around me? Would Italy alone have power to charm, if *he* were no longer here? And yet would not existence be less intolerable without him, if spent amid scenes once hallowed by his presence—where everything would speak to me of him, and fond fancy would hear

his voice in the murmur of every breeze ?

“ But could I bear to linger on amid the ruins of what once was happiness ? Could I endure the tortures of undying remembrance, of ceaseless, hopeless yearnings for the past—‘ the aching and the void within the heart, whereunto none reply ?’

“ I dare not think of it. I have not courage to face the fearful future. No ; rather let me enjoy the present while I may, though every moment’s short-lived bliss be atoned for by long years of lonely agony.”

“ April 13.—Spent an hour or two in Thorwaldsen’s private studio. He is beginning an immense work, of which he himself says he shall probably never live to witness the completion. It is intended for a frieze, and is to be called

‘Il Trionfo del Parnasso.’ It will contain all the poets, sages, and philosophers, who have ever flourished in Greece or Italy. When I observed that it would be too large a work to be placed in any building now existing, he replied, half jokingly, that it would be long enough to reach from Rome to Frascati.

“ As soon as he has finished his colossal equestrian statue for the King of Bavaria, which is to be cast in bronze at Munich, he intends to go there to put it together himself, the model being sent in fragments ; and he talks of proceeding afterwards to Copenhagen, to superintend the putting up of his Twelve Apostles and his superb statue of Christ, all of which, though only ordered by government in plaster (or gesso, as it is called,) he has generously executed in marble, at his own expense, as a gift to his native city. He

says that times are sadly altered for the fine arts of late, and that the case generally stands thus in the present day—
“Quei che hanno gusto non hanno quattrini, e quei che hanno quattrini non hanno gusto.’

“An English gentleman who has long been a resident here, and has the means of being well informed on such points, told me that since the French Revolution of July, there have been comparatively very few orders given to the artists and sculptors in Rome, either by the English or by foreigners. In respect of painting, the Americans seem now to be the greatest patrons of that art, as they are having numerous copies of the finest pictures done for them by many of the first copyists in Italy. Indeed, they have kept both art and artists alive this winter! One could not enter a single

studio without running against an American, in clay or canvas. Their transatlantic charms have been diligently perpetuated ; in marble, by Macdonald ; in cameo, by Saulini ; on ivory by Canevari ; and in oils, by Chatelaine.

“ At the studio of the latter, I saw a full-length picture of an American (Holy ?) family—the Madonna in a ball-dress, with the naked Bambino on her lap—alas, for the white satin and blonde !—and Joseph peeping over her shoulder, *selon les règles*, in a frogged and braided surtout. In default of a little St. John to fill up the foreground, a pet spaniel was introduced, who supplied the deficiency to admiration.

“ What a glorious specimen of modern art, to dazzle the eyes of the untravelled citizens of New York !

“ April 15.—In a few days we are to go on to Naples ; but as we could not leave Rome without having seen Tivoli, we made a party to spend a day there. I think the pleasure of such excursions as this is always increased by being shared with a large party, no matter whether congenial or not, so long as there is one person, and only one, of the whole number, who can enter into your feelings, and sympathize in your enjoyment.

“ Pour le reste, I should say, — the more the merrier ; and I am sure it has proved so to-day.

“ As we had a good twelve hours' work before us, it was unanimously agreed that we must bestir ourselves betimes. Accordingly, the matin bell of Santa Maria Maggiore found us actually en route.

“ Two britschkas full of mamas and

chaperons, chickens and sandwiches, with two disconsolate looking damsels who could not make up their minds to ride! All the rest of the party, mounted on ponies and hacks, chesnuts and blacks, scampered on first, in order to avoid the dust and the surveillance of the carriages. A most brilliant morning it was,—clear and keen,—less truly Italian, perhaps, than those soft languid spring days, which make one feel so deliciously indolent; but more exciting to the spirits more invigorating, and better suited to the enjoyment of a mixed party like ours. The languid days are best adapted to solitary musings, to lonely communings with one's own heart, to repose and perfect stillness. But a morning like this, so fresh and exhilarating, the dew sparkling brightly on the grass, our horses' feet bounding swiftly over it, as if scarcely

deigning to brush it away—such a morning warms the saddest, coldest heart, and kindles a feeling of universal kindness, which overflows in mirth and good-humour, and makes one rejoice in the sight of the happy faces around one, sympathize in their pleasure, and laugh at their follies.

“ Lord Annandale, who only arrived here yesterday on his way to Naples, was persuaded to join our party. He seems to have most cordially forgiven Edith for all her cruelty, and to be quite disposed to make the best of his hard fate, by contenting himself with all she has now to offer,—her regard, or esteem, or whatever other name is best suited to that cold and heartless sentiment, that tepid, flimsy friendship, which some discarded lovers seem to think better worth having than nothing at all, but which I,

for my part, would spurn as the bitterest insult that could be offered me. No! I would have the whole heart, with all its boundless, immeasurable love, or nothing!

“There seems to me a species of indelicacy, a want of refinement which I cannot comprehend, in such attempts at keeping up an intimacy with the woman who has rejected your proffered love, while you see your more fortunate rival enjoying her affections. A strange heart it must be that can willingly expose itself to such a trial!

“With so devoted a cavalier, Edith did not require her husband’s attentions, and he rode by my side all the way. I really am bound to his lordship by the strongest ties of gratitude, for I have not had such a day of pure, unmixed enjoyment since I left Venice.

“ After a delicious ride of rather more than two hours we reached Tivoli ; and leaving our steeds at the Hotel of the Sibyl, we sallied forth to see the cascade, which, strange to say, despite all I had heard of its beauty, surpassed my expectations. The most magnificent view of it is, I think, from the Grotto of Neptune, just under the fall, where the thick clouds of spray which fill the air glisten in the varied hues of the rainbow, and throw a softening veil of mist over all around.

“ The foaming crest of the cascade was beautifully lighted up by a bright gleam of sunshine, while the deep shadow of the overhanging rocks cast a dark shade over the rest.

“ After ascending the opposite bank by a pretty winding walk made by the present pope, and thickly planted with

myrtle, ('un vero giardino Inglese,' as our guide assured us,) the elders mounted their donkeys, and we proceeded to make the 'giro delle cascatelle,' as it is technically called. By this time the cool freshness of the morning had quite worn off, and was succeeded by the fervid heat of the meridian sun, so that we were not sorry, when half the distance was completed, to repose ourselves in a very pretty grove of olives, and make an attack on the provision baskets. A hermit supplied us with water from his cell. Would that I could say it was clear and limpid, as a hermit's fountain ought indubitably to be, according to the incontrovertible laws of poetry and romance, by which hermits and all their appendages are supposed to be governed. It was cruelly tantalizing to see all the sparkling cascatelle on the opposite side of the

ravine, and to hear them dashing and splashing over the rocks beneath, with a sound that was of itself sufficient to make one thirsty on a hot day like this, and then to dip one's parched lips into the thick turbid fluid which the hermit had the impudence to call 'purissima acqua,' and for which he had the conscience to pocket the sum of five pauls.

"Our view of the cascabelle from the olive grove was most lovely ; indeed, that scene far surpasses in beauty (picturesque rather than sublime) anything I have yet seen in Italy."

"April 16.—I have been much struck by a group in the Villa Borghese, by Bernini, which is so singular and curious that it affords a pleasing variety to the never-ending list of Venuses, Jupiters, and Cupids with which every gallery and garden abound. The subject is Apollo

and Daphne, at the moment the latter is striking root and beginning to sprout. There is a force and originality about it which cannot but render it interesting, even if it be less perfect as a piece of sculpture than many other bas-reliefs.

“ In the entrance-hall of the same villa there is a remarkable antique statue of Curtius leaping into the gulf in the Forum. The horse is particularly fine ; but it loses much of its effect from the want of sufficient space beneath to give one the idea of an abyss. He appears to be making a desperate plunge, and looks terribly frightened, though he has only to alight upon the heads of two angels, who are sitting on the top of a door just below him.”

“ April 21.—My last evening at Rome. To-morrow we go to Naples ; but it is our earnest wish, our fondest hope, to

return here in the autumn. As far as human foresight can determine anything, it is settled that we spend another winter here ; but yet a strange foreboding oppresses my mind, whispering gloomy presentiments of disappointed hopes and ills to come. I am not naturally weak or superstitious, but I cannot wholly dispel these dark shadows, or resist their saddening influence.

“ I persuaded Arthur to accompany me this evening to the Colisæum, and I left it with a firm conviction that I should see it no more.

“ The sky, which had been perfectly clear and serene as we walked through the Forum, became suddenly covered with dark masses of rolling clouds, through which a few fitful gleams of moonlight burst ever and anon for a moment, casting a cold pale light through the gloom

of the sombre arches. The night breeze blew keen and chill, and the owl's plaintive cry resounded mournfully through the deep stillness that reigned around. Such a night was perfectly in unison with my own feelings. I would not have had it clear and brilliant, as if in mockery of my sadness,—I would not have had it arrayed in all the charms of Italian loveliness, to increase, if possible, the regret with which I depart.

“ Just as we were thinking of returning homewards, some German artists, who had concealed themselves in a recess in the upper corridor, began to sing an Ave Maria. The effect was perfect. That sudden burst of sweetest harmony, from an unseen choir, amid stillness so profound, seemed almost supernatural; and the voices were so exquisitely blended, the music so solemn, and yet so sooth-

ing, that it seemed as if the glorified spirits of the martyred saints had winged their flight from heaven, to pour forth a triumphant anthem upon the scene of their victorious conflict.

“ We lingered till the last cadence had died on the breeze, and then, unwilling to break the spell by the utterance of a single word, we turned slowly away in silence and sadness. The scented blossoms of the golden wall-flower,

‘ The garland forest which the grey walls wear,’

shed their rich perfume on the air. I gathered one, as a memento of this sorrowful yet delicious evening, then turned to take one more last, lingering look, and bid the spot farewell for ever.”

CHAPTER III.

“ Lo, Nemi ! navell’d in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o’er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake.

* * * * *

And near, Albano’s scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley.”

CHILDE HAROLD.

“ *Velletri*, April 22.—Our first day’s pilgrimage towards Naples is completed, and thirty long miles now lie between Rome and me.

“ Albano’s transparent lake and shady groves could not be passed by in the true

spirit of English travelling, which admits of no delay, and, passing by all that might be seen en route, aims only at the journey's end.

“ I shall never forget the impression this most lovely scene made upon my mind the first time I gazed on it. I was led blindfold to the brink of the precipice overhanging the lake, and when the bandage was removed, and I suddenly beheld the beauty that surrounded me, I was so overwhelmed with surprise and delight, that I could not help bursting into tears. It is indeed a scene that no words can do justice to ;—such a combination of the lovely and the grand, the picturesque and the sublime,—so magnificent as a whole, and yet so exquisite in every little feature.

“ We were all so enchanted with this delightful spot that we decided upon

spending the rest of the summer here, on our return from Naples. Upon inquiry we were so fortunate as to find that the beautiful Villa ——— might be obtained for the period we wanted it, and Arthur lost no time in securing the prize. We then sent the carriage and servants on to Gensano, and proceeded there ourselves, by a wild and picturesque path winding through thick woods of oak and ilex, along the banks of the lakes of Albano and Nemi. Edith and I mounted Khaled by turns, and Arthur led him carefully along, through the steep and sometimes precipitous paths by which we had to pass. The banks were enamelled with the gay blossoms of the pink cyclamen, and anemones of every tint from the faintest blush to the deepest purple ; and the air was fragrant with the rich perfume of the narcissus and hyacinth.

“ The lovely little lake of Nemi is like a diamond edition of its Alban rival. On the summit of the steep rock which overhangs it there is a large convent. The monks, I perceive, never fail to make up in some degree for their abnegation of the good things of the world, by enjoying in their utmost extent the beauties of nature. They are perfectly right. Nothing has a greater tendency to elevate the mind, and make it a fit temple for all pure and holy thoughts, than the contemplation of the wonderful works of God. It is scarcely possible to have one's feelings constantly excited by the exquisite beauties of creation, and yet remain as cold and dead as ever towards the Creator of all this loveliness, the gracious Giver of so much enjoyment.

“ I had a most affecting parting this morning from my venerable friend Thor-

waldsen,—the more so, that I dare hardly look forward to meeting him again in this world. He talks of revisiting Copenhagen; and his health has been lately so far from strong, that I fear the effects of that cold climate will be most baneful to him. He told me he had been obliged to make it a rule not to suffer himself to become attached to any strangers who came to Rome, because he no sooner began to know them intimately, and enjoy their friendship, than his feelings were tried by losing them. The tears stood in his eyes as he kissed my hand and gave me his blessing. I felt that I had indeed been highly favoured in enjoying such a privilege as the friendship of this truly great man, whose benevolence and philanthropy almost make one forget his transcendent powers. It has become too much the fashion of the age to suppose

that a Byronic contempt for our fellow-creatures is the natural concomitant of exalted genius. Thorwaldsen's character is a splendid refutation of such a sentiment."

"*Mola di Gaeta*.—Spent Sunday here, amid orange groves and vineyards. Nothing can be more beautiful; it is a perfect fairy land, the beau idéal of a poet's dream;—so bright and sunny—as if no cloud would ever dare pollute that vault of purest azure; while every breath that fans the air is perfumed with the rich odour of a thousand flowers. The whole of the surrounding country is one vast luxuriant garden, and I walked in the heat of the noonday sun, beneath the delicious shade of orange and citron trees, that dip their golden fruit in the clear, sparkling waters of the Mediterranean.

“ All this coast abounds with vestiges of the luxury of the ancient Romans. Moles, terraces, and gardens, built out for a considerable distance into the sea, attest the pomp and splendour of the olden times. The road from Terracina to Mola is particularly beautiful, and the hedges on either side consist of myrtle, pink accacia, and innumerable odorous shrubs.

“ Nothing is wanting to this terrestrial paradise but inhabitants more worthy of it. It makes one shudder to turn from the contemplation of nature in this her fairest garb, to the squalid, dirty, degraded beings who seem to drag on their miserable existence totally unconscious of the beauty that surrounds them, without energy, without feeling, nay, almost without souls!”

“ *Naples*, April 29.—This being San

Gennaro's day, (the patron saint of Naples,) we went to the church of Santa Chiara, to see the annual miracle of dissolving his blood. The church, which is tolerably large, was thronged to excess ; but by going very early we obtained seats, and after waiting a weary long time, the cardinal archbishop appeared, carrying the blood in two small phials. Then followed an immense procession of huge silver saints, (one hundred and thirty-eight, I believe,) crowned with artificial flowers, and surrounded by wax candles. They were each followed by a cortège of monks of their respective orders. The female saints, I presume, were attended by proxy, as the poor nuns of Santa Chiara were looking down like caged birds from their grated gallery during the whole ceremony, at the conclusion of which the archbishop carried

the blood into the convent, to be devoutly kissed by all the holy sisterhood. Meanwhile a formal litany to San Gennaro was chanted, to the accompaniment of a band of hired performers ; and in the intervals of this chant a group of old hags to the left of the altar kept up a most fearful howling, each addressing the saint according to her own devices, and calling him by the most familiar and disrespectful epithets, which were afterwards exchanged for terms of gross and violent abuse, when hour after hour passed on, and his obdurate blood still refused to dissolve at their entreaties. Some of them cried bitterly, and implored him in the most melting terms not to disgrace his family by withholding the miracle.

“ These women, I was informed, claim kindred with San Gennaro, and are therefore privileged to abuse him at pleasure.

Many of them declared that they would remain all night in the church, and let him have no peace, if he would not ‘fare il miracolo.’

“ After waiting in vain for some hours, it was announced that the saint was to be carried to the Duomo, to see if he was better disposed to perform the miracle there. Our patience being by this time thoroughly exhausted, we did not attempt to follow the procession ; but we were afterwards informed that his saintship condescended to liquefy at about eleven o’clock that night. A gentleman who was present at the time, and examined the phial closely, told me that the blood, which had previously been in thick red clots, was now in a perfectly liquid state. It was then exposed on the high altar, to be kissed by all who were so inclined. This extraordinary superstition

is of such long standing that it appears to me by far the greater part of the people fully believe in it; and it is really managed with so much skill that one cannot wonder if such poor ignorant creatures as the lower class of Neapolitans regard the miracle with feelings of awe and veneration.

“ They say it is always quite uncertain when the saint will perform it; but it seems that the priests can manage this matter very much according to their own good will and pleasure, to judge from the story of the French general, who sent them word that if they excited the rage of the populace by withholding the miracle ten minutes longer, he would let loose the thunders of St. Elmo upon them; which threat instantly produced the desired effect! It is said, however, to be a mystery even amongst the priests.

“ It is certainly a curious fact, that this liquefaction of the saint’s blood puzzled even Sir Humphry Davy, who confessed that, with all his knowledge of chemistry, he could not form a composition that would answer to all the circumstances of the case. It is very easy to say that the melting is occasioned by the warmth of the priest’s hand ; but when one sees that the globules are in a thick glass case, and when one considers, moreover, that they can perform the miracle just at the precise moment they please, it is clear that it is far easier to give an off-hand explanation of the phenomenon, than to combine a substance that should be equally under our control. If this puzzled Sir Humphry, the colossus of chemistry, we need not laugh at the poor, half-savage lazzaroni for believing implicitly what their priests tell them. It is difficult to

imagine that the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples (a descendant of poor Prince Caraccioli, at whose name we English may well blush) can honestly lend himself to such a glaring imposition. Still men can persuade themselves to believe anything, and this reverend prelate perhaps deems it expedient to keep up what *he* may consider a spirit of devotion in the people, by any means in his power, however questionable they may be."

CHAPTER IV.

“ More matter for a May morning.”—TWELFTH NIGHT.

“ A singular thing may be fully delineated ;—it is the sublime or the beautiful, it is the scenery of Naples or the Belvidere Apollo, that baffles description.”—FORSYTH.

“ MAY 10.—Having engaged to join a large party in ascending Vesuvius, we did not like to retract, though the coldness of the weather sorely tempted us to postpone the excursion to a more genial day. It was a fine clear morning, but excessively keen, and a sharp cutting wind blew fiercely from the mountains, which are covered with snow from a fresh

fall last night. So much for a Neapolitan May !

“ We left the carriages at Resina, and proceeded to mount our mules and ponies. But though we had taken the necessary precaution to bespeak the precise number required, yet we were so tormented by men and boys bellowing and screaming, while their respective quadrupeds amused themselves with neighing and kicking, that we were forced to take refuge in the house of Salvatore, the cicerone, while the gentlemen tried in vain to appease the tumult. It seemed as if Aversa itself (the Italian bedlam) were let loose upon us ; and I never felt more thankful for any deliverance in my life than when I found myself seized by a powerful arm, placed upon the back of a rough pony, and dragged forth from the midst of the uproar, leaving the rest of the party to

follow as they best could, on the 'sauve qui peut' system.

“ When we reached the foot of the cone we all dismounted, and the ladies were carried up in chairs by Portantini. I, however, persisted, in spite of all remonstrances, in my determination to reach the crater on foot ; and my perseverance was crowned with success ; though, I must confess, I little knew what I was undertaking.

“ My guide pulled me up after him by means of a leather strap, which was fastened round my waist ; and he kept repeating from time to time the following distich, for my encouragement, no doubt :—

‘ Chi va piano, va sano ;
Chi va forte, va alla morte.’

“ But, in direct opposition to his adage, he pulled me up so fast that I was

scarcely able to breathe, and very often, when I fell down upon the sharp-pointed rocks of lava, he still dragged me on most mercilessly, never looking back to ascertain if I were capable of following him.

“ At last we reached the summit, and, exhausted as I was, I gladly threw myself down to rest upon the first smooth piece of rock that presented itself. However, I chanced to meet with a warmer reception than I expected, and on starting up again rather hastily, I found to my utter dismay that I had burned a large hole in my dress !

“ One of our party, a naval officer, whose protuberant jacket had excited much curiosity, and given rise to many jokes during our ascent, now explained the mystery most satisfactorily, by drawing out from his pouch an enormous

union jack, which he triumphantly hoisted on the summit of Vesuvius.

“ The wind was so strong upon this elevated and exposed situation that it was scarcely possible to stand. We were often obliged to creep along on our hands and knees, and the small dust from the ashes was blown into our eyes, nearly blinding us ; so that, all things considered, I would not again select a windy day for ascending la Montagna.

“ After having walked round the crater, looked down into its frightful abyss,—a depth of three hundred feet,—warmed our hands over the hot cinders, and eaten some eggs that were roasted in them, we came down again considerably faster than we went up.

“ Each lady being supported by two gentlemen, we ran down the precipitous sides of the cone, sinking up to the knees

at every step in a soft bed of ashes, which prevented our falling head-foremost from the top to the bottom, as we certainly should otherwise have done. Several shoes and fragments of stockings were irrecoverably lost in that rapid descent ; but from the various remnants of those articles which appeared here and there amongst the lava, we had at least the comfort of knowing that we did not fare worse than our predecessors.

“ Many of the party grumbled not a little, because the mountain would not ‘get up an eruption’ for our benefit ; and the guides tried in vain to soothe them by specious tales of dried-up wells, and other favourable prognostics, with which they invariably attempt to foster fallacious hopes in the bosom of the luckless traveller.

“ After an excellent cold dinner at the

Hermitage, about a mile from the foot of the cone, we remounted our mules and commenced our descent by torch-light, the evening having set in dark and cloudy. Each muleteer carried a light, and as I looked back upon the rest of our party, slowly winding down the narrow pass through which our path lay, the long line of bright, yet funereal-looking torches produced a grand, though sombre effect ; and the whole scene was invested with a sort of dreamy indistinctness, an undefined magnificence, which rendered it far more striking than by day."

" May 21.—What a change the last week has wrought in the aspect of all without, and the feelings of all within ! The piercing tramontana has given way to the balmy zephyr, the sun reigns with undisputed sway over his own fair empire,

the lazzaroni creep forth from their baskets to revel in his rays—all nature teems with joy and animation, and Naples is herself again !

“ I have frequently heard it asserted that those persons whose natural disposition and temperament are calculated to enter fully into the sober charms and tranquil enjoyments of Rome, generally find but little to delight them in Naples. For my own part, I must confess that although my early predilections and dearest associations bind me heart and soul to Rome, yet I have found much to enjoy, much to enchant me, at Naples.

“ Rome is indeed pre-eminently ‘ the city of the soul ;’ and what wonder is it if the soulless, heartless, frivolous beings who wander over the world merely in quest of variety and amusement, prefer

the gay promenades and animated shores of Naples to the deserted streets and sombre ruins of Rome ; the one breathing life, and joy, and mirth—the other speaking, as with a voice from the tomb, of buried empires and vanished splendour !

“ Naples is like a fair young bride garlanded with flowers, and gladdening all around her with the sunshine of her smiles, as if no cloud could ever obscure that serene brow—no tempest sweep over that brilliant sky.

“ Rome, like a bereaved widow, seems to mourn over the tomb of her departed glory, and to live but in the remembrance of that which has been. If she smile for a moment, it is a sad and tearful smile—a transient gleam from the light of other days—a memory of the past—a dream of former triumphs.

‘ The Niobe of nations ! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe !’

She silently appeals to every heart for sympathy, and awakens a chord of deep and tender feeling in every bosom that has known what it is ‘ to suffer and be still.’

“ Each is, in its own peculiar style, surpassingly lovely ; but Naples delights the eye and captivates the senses, while Rome speaks to the soul, and calls forth its noblest powers.

“ But for myself—strange, inconsistent creature that I am—I have been happy, ay, supremely happy, in both places. At Rome I enjoyed a sort of tranquil, sober happiness—a dreamy state of existence, most soothing and delightful to the mind ; when hour after hour glides insensibly away in waking visions of the unknown future, or in thoughts of the

absent and the lost. But here it is all excitement, action, animation. Thought seems banished from these gay precincts, and sadness shrinks abashed from the uncongenial glare of this perpetual sunshine. It is one scene of laughter, frolic, and wild mirth; the air is filled with shouts and songs, and the voice of merriment is borne on every breeze.

“ The sea, too—the bright, blue sea, dancing over coral beds, and sparkling in the sunbeams—how I love to watch its tiny waves as they sportively kiss the vine-clad shore ! But there is no rest in that ceaseless motion—no repose in that never-ending murmur ; it excites, but cannot calm the mind ; it delights the eye and soothes the ear for a time, but leaves a void behind—a something to be satisfied—a feverish restlessness not easily to be subdued.

“ To be alone is sufficient happiness at Rome ; but here solitude becomes wearisome and insupportable ; and the mind, animated and excited by the spirit of the place, naturally seeks for congenial society to share in the outpourings of its exuberant delight.

“ Fortunately for me, I have not been doomed to sigh in vain for such sympathy. The happy days of Venice have been renewed at Naples, and with far more exquisite enjoyment. My mornings have flown but too swiftly away in exploring, with Arthur, the unburied treasures of Pompeii, and the noble halls of the museum, or in delicious rides, amid scenery too lovely for description, where every spot has some interesting association, and every rock its history.

“ To-day we bent our steps towards the Lago d'Agnano, whose limpid waters

slumber in undisturbed tranquillity upon the ruins of a desolated city. Here was a subject for thought, not unworthy of Rome herself!

“ We lingered on its banks till the sun had sunk behind the surrounding hills, and the stars began to peep forth one by one in the bright firmament above. We then turned reluctantly homewards, winding our way through lanes bordered by tall poplars, from which the vines hung in graceful festoons, forming one unbroken chain of verdure, till we reached the sombre entrance to the gloomy grotto of Posilippo. Were it not for the tempting scenes that lie beyond it, I should seldom care to pass through this dismal cavern. The noisome odours with which it abounds, and the chance of coming in contact with the tremendous horns of one of those enormous white oxen, or the

shafts of the *curricoli* that gallop through it at a fearful pace, render it by no means an inviting route.

“ Mais ‘ s’il faut souffrir pour *être* belle,’ it is but fair to suppose that one must sometimes suffer to *see* what is beautiful ; and the view that bursts upon the astonished eye on emerging from this dark vault, is an ample recompence for all previous annoyances.

“ We returned home just in time to dress for a dinner-party at Lady D.’s, where we met some very clever and agreeable people. I would fain record some of the brilliant things I heard, but am far too weary to do them justice.

“ And yet, if I had but the faintest glimmering of feeling left, what inspiration would this scene afford ! I am sitting by my open window which overlooks the bay. The cool night-

breezes sweep freshly o'er the roses and citrons with which my balcony is adorned, filling the whole room with their delicious fragrance ; while the brilliant torches of the fishermen flit like fire-flies over the waves, now blazing brightly, and casting a vivid gleam upon the water,—now dying away, and leaving the darkness still darker than before.”

CHAPTER V.

“ Let not a doubt in my soul have place,
To dim the light of the loved one’s face.”

F. HEMANS.

“ No ; I will be the pattern of all patience ;
I will say nothing.”

KING LEAR.

It was unfortunate for Edith that she did not more studiously endeavour to conform to her husband’s taste in matters of comparatively trifling importance—that she did not more fully sympathize in all his little pleasures and enjoyments.

The darling of her fond mother, from earliest infancy she had always been accustomed to feel herself the first object of every thought and every action ; her in-

clinations were consulted on all points—her least wish was generally a law. But now the case was far otherwise ; it was now her turn to yield ; she was henceforth to be ruled by the wishes of another, and to sacrifice her every desire, her every inclination, if, by so doing, she could in the least degree contribute to the happiness of him she loved. And she did love him,—tenderly, devotedly. She would not have hesitated to make the greatest sacrifices for his sake ; she would cheerfully give up her own wishes in favour of his, on all matters of importance, but she did not sufficiently understand the weight of trifles ; and often did she neglect an opportunity of gratifying some little whim, some passing fancy of De Vere's, and satisfy herself with the thought “it is such a trifle, it cannot signify.”

Her quiet, passive disposition shrank from any unnecessary exertion, and the climate of Italy tended greatly to increase the natural languor and listlessness which frequently oppressed her.

It was often a relief to her to find that Gertrude's society was so congenial to De Vere, and that she seemed so readily to enter into all his tastes and pursuits ; for she felt that while her friend so well supplied her place, she need not exert herself to overcome her own inclinations. Thus did she often leave Gertrude and Arthur to spend whole days together in long walks and rides—in visiting picture galleries, or exploring ruins. She was delighted to think they were so well amused—she listened with interest to their accounts of all they had done and seen together—she enjoyed the present moment, and, in the simplicity of her

guileless heart, never dreamed for an instant of the evil that was to ensue.

But she could not long remain under this happy infatuation. Even were she blinded herself by the confidence of trusting affection, there were others who had their eyes wide open, and were quite willing to make full use of them.

Some good-natured friend was not slow to suggest, that "Miss Aylmer and Mr. De Vere seemed to enjoy each other's society extremely;" or to throw out a gentle hint that such fascinating young ladies were dangerous companions.

At first Edith only laughed at these insinuations, and repeated them to Arthur as a good joke; but by degrees her own observations confirmed too surely the opinion of the world; and though she laughed still, she brooded over it in secret, and never mentioned the subject again to her husband.

There too she was wrong. She should have dealt ingenuously with him,—she should have told him unreservedly all she felt and feared. He could not but have been grateful for such a proof of confidence ; his heart was far too generous not to have grieved over the idea of wounding the feelings of her whom he had vowed to love and cherish ; he would have been warned of the danger he was blindly incurring, and he would assuredly, for his Edith's sake, have resisted the infatuation that was gradually enthralling him, while it was yet in his power to do so.

Poor, poor Edith ! With the best intentions, with the most ingenuous disposition, she erred from want of judgment, from utter ignorance of that most incomprehensible thing—the heart of man. She knew not that the intensity and tranquil permanence of love most of all

depend upon the exclusion of all lurking doubts concerning the secret disposition or real sentiments of the object of our regard, and that "to harbour the thought that there is yet at all in the soul of one near to us a concealment that we have not explored, is the same thing as to hold the whole of our affection in abeyance."

The heat of Naples having become almost insupportable, they had determined upon spending a few weeks amid the shady groves and refreshing breezes of Castellamare. Here Gertrude and Arthur used to delight in making little excursions by sea, one day to Sorrento, another to Resina, and once they even ventured as far as Capri. In these expeditions Edith never accompanied them, for she particularly disliked sailing; partly from constitutional timidity, and partly from inability to enjoy it. In

short, as she herself playfully confessed, she shewed decided symptoms of hydrophobia, but she should be very sorry to be the means of spoiling their pleasure, and hoped they would leave her to amuse herself on shore.

And how did she contrive to wile away those lonely hours? Not unfrequently in wandering through the lovely woods of Quisisana, upon her beautiful little Calabrese pony, with Lord Annandale by her side, to guide it over the rough places and lead it down the steep paths.

It was indeed a perfect creature, that Calabrese steed, with its long tail and flowing mane, and well did it merit the name of Bianco, for not a speck could be discerned on its silky snow-white skin. Lord Annandale had once been its master; but Edith having expressed great admiration of its various perfections, it was

speedily transferred to her stables, with a note from its noble owner, saying that he found the pony much too small for his own use, and hoped she would sometimes do him the favour to mount it.

Edith had never been fond of riding, but Bianco was so beautiful and so gentle that she could not resist such a temptation, and Lord Annandale was richly repaid for his gift by the privilege of being sometimes permitted to escort her in her rides.

One lovely afternoon, after an early dinner, De Vere and Gertrude set off as usual, with a guitar and sketch-book, intending to sail as far as Portici; but finding that they made very little progress, for want of a sufficient breeze, they landed near Pompeii, and sauntered through the intervening meadows till they reached those interesting ruins.

Several parties were already exploring them, and the ciceroni being all engaged, Gertrude and Arthur were left at liberty to wander about unmolested by the interference of those licensed tormentors. They carefully avoided meeting any of the parties who had preceded them, lest they should find amongst them some of their Anglo-Neapolitan friends, whose company they would willingly dispense with, and whose scandal-loving tongues they well knew would not fail to dilate upon their tête-à-tête.

So well did they succeed in their desire of eluding observation, that when, after taking various sketches, and rambling about for some hours, the setting sun reminded them that it was time to return home, they retraced their steps to the door by which they had entered, and found it—locked ! In vain did they

knock and call out to the guides ;—everybody was gone, and the door was closed for the night.

They then thought of trying the other entrance, at the opposite extremity of the town ; but on arriving there they found that also well secured, and no one within hearing of their calls.

In this disagreeable dilemma, locked up for the night amid the ruins of Pompeii, with scarcely a hope or a chance of escaping, nothing was left for them but to make the best of their lot,—which, indeed, they were well disposed to do. A thought of Edith occurred unpleasantly now and then, for they knew that to her timid and anxious mind a host of imaginary dangers would present themselves in fearful array, and if the boat did not return to Castellamare, which was quite possible, she would no doubt fancy they

were upset and drowned. However, there was no resource but to let things take their course. Their chance of escape became every moment more remote, Pompeii being at some distance from any town or village, and the early hours of the Italian peasantry rendering it highly improbable that any one should by that time be still so far from home.

In the mild and genial atmosphere of Italy, and especially beneath the bright, starry sky of Naples, a night *al fresco* is by no means so severe an infliction as it would be in the damp and chilly air of England. The keen demands of hunger must indeed remain unsatisfied for many a weary hour, as all the slender remnants of Pompeian hospitality have long ago been transferred to the Museo Borbonico. Not a fragment of a roof could they find

under which to shelter themselves ; and as sleep in the open air would be fraught with danger, they determined to resist its attacks by continued walking.

It was indeed a lovely night ; not a sound disturbed the stillness that pervaded the air : and there they stood, alone amid the city of the dead, surrounded by fragments of by-gone greatness, the crumbling vestiges of the grandeur of former ages.

Above them shone the clear, pure sapphire of an Italian heaven, “ so darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,” and radiant with the united lustre of ten thousand stars ; while, faintly gleaming on the horizon’s verge, the pale, crescent moon was just visible above the dim outline of a distant shore.

Behind them rose Vesuvius,—the destroyer of so much magnificence,—the

ruthless spoiler of the glory of ages,—calmly looking down upon his fearful work of devastation, and preparing, perchance, in the depths of his dread abyss, new floods of fire for the destruction of future generations.

Dark columns of smoke cast a murky cloud over the brightness of the azure vault above, and ever and anon a lurid flame threw up for a moment a strong gleam of light, as if struggling to escape from its prison-house, and then shrunk back to bide its time, before it might again wreak its fury on the earth.

It formed a splendid contrast, that red and flickering flame from below, with the pure, soft radiance that beamed from above; the one resembling the deep and enthralling, yet unstable passion of earthly love; the other shining with the calm and holy and steady light of a love

refined from the dross of earth, and reflecting, as it were, a ray from heaven.

Gertrude's strength at last begun to fail her. Exhausted with fatigue, she sat down to rest on the fragment of a broken pillar, her head leaning on Arthur's shoulder. She felt at that moment that she would far rather live and die with him, amid the ruins of that lone and deserted city, than enjoy all the splendour and triumphs that the world could offer, or ambition covet, if unblest by his presence, uncheered by his smile.

“Gertrude, dearest, you must rouse yourself,” he exclaimed; “I cannot let you sleep. Come, sing me one of my favourite songs; it will cheer us both.”

Ever eager to gratify his least wish, whether only looked, or expressed in words, she immediately exerted herself

to overcome the drowsiness that was stealing over her, and began to sing a lively Neapolitan air, which she had learned from a grotesque little laz-zarone boy, who often accompanied them in their boating excursions, to make mirth and music for the amusement of the party.

Hardly had she finished the first verse, when the second was taken up with considerable effect by a cracked sort of half-sleepy, half-tipsy voice, on the other side of the wall.

De Vere jumped up, and clambering as well as he could to the top of a projecting arch, he called out to the singer, whoever he might be, conjuring him by San Genaro and Bacco, and all that is most sacred to a Neapolitan heart, to have pity upon two unfortunate strangers who were locked up in Pompeii.

For some time the man demurred, declaring that the cicerone was fast asleep long ago, and would on no account give up the key even if he did presume to disturb him at such an unreasonable hour ; but at length, by dint of gradually increasing the promised reward till it doubled the sum originally offered, Arthur prevailed on him to say he would go to the cicerone and try what he could do with him.

A few dollars in a skilful and experienced hand are a sort of passe-partout throughout Italy. There are no gates or bars, from the palace to the prison, that they cannot unlock,—no heart so stern that they cannot soften,—no principles so rigid that they cannot unbend,—and (greatest of all miracles)—no indolence so profound that it will not fly before their magic touch !

Having arranged with the man by which door they were to be let out, they lost no time in moving towards it ; but a long and tedious hour passed away before he returned with the cicerone and his key.

It needed all the soothing influence of the silver wand to pacify the angry cicerone, who declared that if it were known that any strangers had explored Pompeii unattended by a guide, he should inevitably be deprived of his office ; for such a keen eye is kept by government upon these unburied treasures, that even the harmless theft of a common brick or pebble within the walls of Pompeii is rigorously prohibited, and would be punished by instant expulsion. It is needless to add, by way of parenthesis, that the very strictness of this surveillance only makes our relic-loving

countrymen more bent upon picking and stealing than ever ; and it is a fact that an Englishman seriously injured his skull by carrying off a large fragment of marble from Herculaneum, concealed in the crown of his hat !

On reaching the shore De Vere found the boat just where they had left it, and the boatman fast asleep. They were soon safe on board, and making all sail for Castellamare ; but it was long past midnight before they reached the little harbour.

Edith, who had been anxiously and tremblingly awaiting their return, no sooner descried the boat in the distance by the bright star-light, than she hastened down to the mole to meet them. Lord Annandale, after accompanying her in her ride, had returned home with her, and being unwilling to leave her alone, had lingered on till a late hour in the

evening. He would gladly have remained till De Vere's return, had not her manner plainly shewn him that she would prefer his leaving her; but he sympathized too kindly in all her feelings not to share her anxiety on this occasion, and he was walking up and down the little terrace in front of his villa, watching for the first glimpse of the wanderers, when he saw Edith, unattended, hurrying down towards the harbour. He could not do less than beg permission to escort her; but guessing, from the hesitation with which his offer was accepted, that she preferred meeting her husband alone, he no sooner saw her safe within a few yards of De Vere than he hastily wished her good-night, and returned towards his solitary home.

A feeling of disappointment, not to say irritation, crept over poor Edith's heart, when, in reply to her eager in-

quiries and anxious expressions of alarm, Arthur only asked her, with some asperity, how she could think of coming down to the mole alone at that time of night? Nor did he look better satisfied when she told him that Lord Annandale had accompanied her.

In awkward and chilling silence the little party proceeded up the hill. Edith was hurt by her husband's coldness, and Gertrude, who at any other time would have contrived to throw a veil over the disagreeable aspect of affairs, by laughing and talking for everybody, was now far too tired and exhausted to open her lips.

Edith had sufficient penetration to perceive, that however much her husband might choose to gratify his penchant for Gertrude's society, he was by no means disposed to allow her the same

privilege with regard to Lord Annandale. On the contrary, he shewed such evident disapprobation of the intimacy which had insensibly sprung up between them, that Edith, who was wholly guiltless of entertaining any warmer sentiment for her rejected suitor than gratitude for his devoted friendship, felt it incumbent upon her to treat him with more reserve than she was naturally disposed to do, and to avoid his society as much as she possibly could without the appearance of rudeness.

No small credit was due to Edith for this prudent resolution. Admired and flattered, sought and sued, as she had always been hitherto, it was hard, very hard, to feel herself, while in the hey-day of youth and beauty, and within a few short months of her marriage, neglected by the man for whose sake she had

sacrificed everything else—to whom she had fondly and faithfully clung through years of absence and uncertainty, and in whose cause she had even risked the danger of opposing a mother's judgment, of disregarding a mother's advice !

It was hard, very hard to bear this mortifying neglect, this too evident preference of another's society.

Edith felt that it was so ;—even her meek spirit revolted at the humiliating thought, and sometimes she felt strongly tempted to retaliate,—to shew him that she too could be happy with another, and that in the ardent friendship and deep devotion of one who, in spite of coldness and rejection, was still constant and faithful, she could find ample compensation for the neglect and indifference of a wayward and capricious husband.

Who could blame her, if such thoughts did sometimes find a place in her young and inexperienced heart ? And had she yielded to the temptation, — had the worst consequences ensued,—would not her husband have been compelled to reproach himself as the cause of all the evil?—would he not, as he beheld that consummation of misery, have been forced to confess that it was his work ?

But if the idea of such retaliation flitted sometimes, like a spirit of darkness, across her pure and guileless breast, it was never allowed to harbour there,—no, not for an instant. She would repel it with indignation, and nobly determine, in a higher strength than her own, to persevere in the path of duty, however dreary and desolate that path might be ; and then, “ betide what may,”

she would say,—“ I shall at least have the consolation of knowing that I have not deserved to lose my husband’s affections.”

CHAPTER VI.

“ The morning watch was come,—the vessel lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid way ;
The cloven billow flash’d from off her prow
In furrows formed by that majestic plough ;
The sail resumed its lately shadow’d white,
And the wind flutter’d with a freshening flight.”

BYRON.

EXTRACTS FROM GERTRUDE’S DIARY.

“ JUNE 12.—Having tried in vain to persuade Edith to accompany us, Arthur and I availed ourselves of a brilliant day and gentle breeze to sail to Capri. The famous blue grotto was the first thing in that island to engage our attention ; and leaving our little vessel, we got into

a tiny cockleshell of a boat, kept for the purpose, which is just able to glide through the small aperture in the rock at low water.

“ We were desired to lie down flat at the bottom of the boat, and on no account to raise our heads, lest they should come in contact with the rock as we entered the cave. When once fairly in however, we had abundance of room to stand up and look about us, as this curious grotto is high and spacious. I am not chemist enough to account for the intense blue, of the deepest shade of ultra-marine, which pervades the air and water, and every thing within this enchanted cave; but I believe it is owing to the peculiar manner in which the light enters, the only aperture being the one by which we entered, and which is so small as to be scarcely perceptible from the outside.

An artist at Rome, who has made a very pretty picture of the interior of this grotto, told me, that having lingered there till the water was too high to admit of his getting out again, he was kept in durance for many hours.

“ We measured the depth of the water in the centre of the cavern, and found it twelve fathoms; it is so exquisitely clear that we could plainly discern the sounding-lead, even at that depth.

“ Our exit from the grotto was rather disagreeable, owing to there being a considerable swell in the sea; and our awkward boatman was so frightened himself, that he could not manage the little skiff at all. However, Arthur lent a helping hand, and, thanks to his coolness and firmness, after sundry bumpings and buffetings against the rock, we slipped out triumphantly on the foamy crest of

a wave. We then proceeded to explore the island, and ascended to the ruins of the Villa of Tiberius, which are situated on the highest point, and command a splendid view of the whole of that interesting line of coast which bounds the bays of Naples and Salerno.

“Part of these ruins has been converted into a little chapel and hermitage, inhabited by a solitary monk, who regaled us with some horribly sour wine. It was all he had to offer! Near the villa is a tremendous precipice, where ‘Signor Timberio,’ as the guide informed us, used to throw down into the sea the unhappy victims of his suspicious tyranny!

“The little town of Ana-Capri is perched like a bird’s-nest upon the cliffs, and the only ascent to it is by flights of steps cut in the solid rock.

“Having seen all the wonders of the

island, we re-entered our boat, and were making the best of our way homewards, when a yacht which was sailing in the opposite direction, lay to, and made signals for us to come on board. On a nearer inspection she proved to be the Maid of the Mist, Captain Darcourt's beautiful vessel. He had reconnoitred us through his glass, and kindly invited us to join his party in a cruise to Pæstum.

“ Such a proposal was far too tempting to be declined, and having dispatched a few lines to Edith by our trusty boatman, to save her all needless anxiety on our account, we found ourselves, in the space of a few moments, most agreeably transferred from the rough and dirty boards of a Neapolitan fishing-boat, to the snow-white deck of an English yacht.

“ I was no less surprised than delighted to find my vivacious friend the Chevalier

L—— on board, who (let the rest of the party be as dull as they pleased) was sure to be provided with a never-failing fund of mirth and entertainment. Such a person is indeed an invaluable acquisition on these occasions; for there are times when even the most aquatic animal must find yachting a tedious amusement, and cast many a longing glance towards the distant shore.

“ Par exemple: when, after rolling about in a heavy ground-swell throughout the whole of the livelong night, your limbs cramped and aching from the hard boards and narrow dimensions of your berth, daylight gradually dawns upon your weary eyes, and you cast them upwards with a despairing glance towards the cabin skylight. But nothing can you see, save the mast rocking slowly and deliberately from side to side. The

lamp suspended from the ceiling—the cloaks hanging up against the door—everything seems infected with the spirit of the place, and rolls to and fro with the same interminable see-saw ! You gaze till you can endure the sight no longer, and after making a hasty toilet, you hurry up on deck, anticipating, with eager curiosity, the new scenes that await your anxious eye. Vain hope ! You have scarcely progressed one single mile during the whole of that long, long night. The same rocks—the same tower—the same clump of trees you gazed on at sunset, now appear, as if in mockery of your disappointment, to salute you on your rising. To complete your miseries, the deck has just been washed, or rather, it is still under water ; so that, after taking a survey of the aspect of affairs, you are obliged to creep down again into the

cabin, and vent your spleen by arousing your companions in misfortune from their slumbers, in order to have the benevolent satisfaction of communicating to them in person the pleasing intelligence you have just obtained.

“ Such was our fate during the first night we spent on board the Maid of the Mist. The faint breeze that had just fanned the sails during the day, completely died away at sunset, and seeing that all further progress was hopeless, Captain Darcourt, unknown to us, had given orders to cast anchor. More miserable-looking beings than some of the party who were assembled round the breakfast-table on the following morning could scarcely be found. Two luckless Neapolitans, who had been prevailed upon, sore against their better judgment, to trust themselves to the mercy of the

winds and waves, presented such a truly pitiable appearance as bore ample testimony to their sufferings during the night. Most of the ladies, too, proved deplorable sailors; and had it not been for the Captain's heart-cheering announcement that a fine breeze was beginning to spring up, I really think we should have had a mutiny on board, seized the jolly-boat, and made the best of our way towards the shore, from which we were not distant more than three or four miles. However, this delightful piece of intelligence gladdened all hearts, and the Chevalier L——, who with unfailing spirits and good-humour had been exerting himself most magnanimously to amuse a dull and listless audience, was now happily released from his thankless task, and the whole party rushed on deck with one accord, to verify the captain's report. In

the course of an hour the breeze had freshened into a gale, which was fortunately directly in our favour, and we flew across the gulf of Salerno with the most delightful rapidity.

“ How animating, how exhilarating it is, to feel oneself bounding over the waves, as if scarcely deigning to touch them,—leaving a long line of white foam behind glittering and sparkling in the sunshine, while the gallant vessel flies on and on, as if nothing could ever arrest her progress ! How like a thing of life she seems, cleaving with her snowy wings those foaming waters, while, heedless of their angry roar, she proudly and steadily holds on her appointed course !

“ An hour ago, she lay drooping and spiritless upon the bosom of the ocean, as if exhausted and pining for air ; but no sooner does the life-inspiring breeze wave

his glad pinions o'er her, than she awakens from her long, deep trance, and gratefully expanding her folded wings, she flies before him across the impetuous tide, now rising gaily upon the curling crest of a mighty billow, now sinking gracefully into the depth below.

“ We were soon within sight of Pæstum, but alas ! it was not deemed safe to attempt a nearer approach to the shore. There is such a surf upon this coast, that in rough weather it is really dangerous, and the Captain declared that it would be madness to think of landing ; so we were obliged to submit to our fate, and content ourselves with straining our eyes, and peering through the glasses, that we might be able to swear with a clear conscience that we had seen the ruins of Pæstum. The least submissive of the party was Mrs. Darcourt herself,

who, though rather addicted to hysterics, nervous tremors, and other symptoms of fine ladyism on shore, was a perfect dreadnought afloat ! For some time she persisted in her intention of landing, till the Captain, who, whatever might be his indifference as to the fate of his lady, had evidently no intention of sacrificing his new and gaily-painted long-boat, at length issued his commands, in a tone of most indisputable authority, to ‘ about ship’ and return homewards.

“ The retreat did not prove quite so agreeable as the advance, and the evening breezes being rather too cool to be enjoyed on deck, I went down into the cabin, where I consoled myself with two or three games of chess with the Chevalier L——, who maliciously contrived so effectually to distract my attention by his amusing stories and witty anecdotes, that I was checkmated in every game.

“ One of these jeux d’esprit, which I rather suspect to be his own, though he fathers it upon his countrymen, struck me as a very whimsical and original idea.

“ The Prussians, he says, have a curious method of settling the laws of precedence amongst the sovereigns of Europe. They place first in order,

“ The King of England, because he can boast two *Houses*.

“ 2ndly. The King of the French, who has two *Chambers*.

“ 3rdly. The sovereigns of Austria and Prussia, who have only *Cabinets*.

“ 4thly. The Grand Seignior, who has nothing but a *Divan* (or *Sofa*).

“ And lastly, the Pope, who, poor man, is reduced to a *Chair* !

“ The next morning found us within a few miles of Amalfi, again rolling about in a heavy swell, and without a breath of air.

To dispel the ennui that was again beginning to creep over his troublesome crew, Captain Darcourt very good-naturedly proposed that we should go on shore and explore the beauties of Amalfi. The offer was joyfully accepted, and having filled two boats with this most unprofitable cargo, he presided at the helm of one himself, while his mate (not Mrs. Darcourt, but Bill Simpkins) took the command of the other.

“ But the getting ashore was an affair more easily talked of than accomplished. We had to encounter a very formidable surf; and though, thanks to the skill of our steersman, we were at last landed safe and dry upon the beach, yet the other boat was within an inch of being swamped, and its luckless crew were obliged to consider themselves fortunate in getting off with nothing more serious than a thorough drenching.

“ The first thing that attracted our attention was a large manufactory of macaroni, the staple commodity of Amalfi, and a thing by no means to be lightly esteemed in this part of the world.

“ Macaroni is, in fact, quite an important personage at Naples, as is evinced by the popular song, ‘ Quanto son belle le Macaroni.’

“ Indeed, it may well be questioned whether St. Macaroni is not treated with more constant deference than even San Gennaro himself, upon whose unlucky head, in a moment of wrath, or when he is longer than usual in performing his annual miracle, the lazzaroni scruple not to heap the vituperative epithets of Birbante, Bricone, and Birbantaccio !

A Neapolitan will never dream of offering you a dish of macaroni without

descanting upon its excellences, and giving you a catalogue of its wonderful properties which would completely throw into the shade Farina's all-healing eau de Cologne, or

‘Thy incomparable oil, Macassar.’

“He feels, or at least seems, anxious that you should enjoy it as thoroughly and cordially as he does himself; although perhaps he may not press you, unless you are an especial favourite, to dispense with those vulgar incumbrances a knife and fork, and to gather up your maccaroni, according to the most approved Neapolitan fashion, with the paws which in his judgment were bestowed on you by nature for no other purpose. The air of triumph and complacency with which a fellow-countryman of the Maccaroni regards a new disciple

as he is filling his plate with this delicacy is inexpressibly ludicrous.

“ Having watched the whole process of this important manufacture, and the Captain having ordered a sufficient cargo of maccaroni to be sent on board the Maid of the Mist, to provision her, in that department at least, for the next ten years, we proceeded to ascend the cliff.

“ Each lady was carried in a chair upon the shoulders of half a dozen men, followed by a train of from twenty to thirty ragged wretches, who contrived to attach themselves to the party upon some absurd pretext or other, but having, in fact, no other end or aim in view than that of sharing in the spoils.

“ After ascending for some time by a series of steps and winding paths, we at length attained the summit of our ambition, an old convent perched upon a

ledge of rock, about half way up the precipitous cliff that overhangs the sea. A situation of greater beauty could not possibly be imagined than that which is occupied by this venerable building, now used as an inn, but happily allowed to remain precisely in its original form, unimproved, or rather uninjured, by any modern alterations.

“ We passed through long corridors opening into a row of snug little dormitories, bare indeed, and totally destitute of all furniture save a narrow uncurtained bedstead, and a wooden chair ; but clean and whitewashed, and commanding such a splendid view as might well atone for the absence of all other luxuries.

“ Beyond the convent there is a neat little garden and terrace-walk, occupying all the remaining space that this platform

affords. Behind it the rock rises perpendicularly to an immense height, and in front, at a depth of some hundred feet, is the sea, dashing and foaming against the cliff with unceasing roar.

“ Having made an excellent dinner upon macaroni and fish fried in oil, we re-entered our triumphal cars, and descended the hill at a sort of running trot, which was anything but agreeable. Hoisted upon the shoulders of these semi-savages, who did not understand one word that was said to them, it was certainly by no means a pleasant sensation to look down into the frightful abyss below, and to think that one false step might send you headlong down to inevitable perdition.

“ The path was so narrow as barely to admit of three persons abreast, but our portantini flew along, heedless of all en-

treaties, and seemed bent only upon trying who could get first to the bottom. It was with no small difficulty that I kept my seat, especially on descending the steps, when I fully expected to have been thrown head foremost out of the chair. No successful M.P. could ever more cordially congratulate himself at the conclusion of his chairing, than I did on finding myself once more safe on my own legs.

“ Our rambles were brought to a full stop much sooner than we desired, by the setting in of a hopelessly drizzling, mizzling rain early in the evening. We had no choice but to return to the yacht with all possible expedition, and accordingly we tumbled into the boats one after another as fast as we could.

“ But such a scene as ensued no words can describe ! The portantini with their

clamorous, barefooted, suite of ragamuffins, (worthy of the tail of the great Agitator himself!) pursued us to the water's edge, screaming and shouting with a deafening roar that seemed to silence the very billows. Some of them even caught hold of two or three of the ladies, and by their threatening gestures seemed disposed to detain them as hostages, if their exorbitant demands were not satisfied.

“In this emergency Captain Darcourt displayed a degree of coolness and cleverness which we all laughed at heartily when our alarm had subsided. He proposed to one of the chief portantini to come on board the yacht and there receive whatever might be due to him and his companions, declaring that he had not money enough in his pocket to pay them on the spot. While this treaty,

offensive and defensive, was being carried on, we had all embarked; and the Captain jumping in after us, and pushing off from the shore, left these worthies to digest his terms as they best might. They were evidently in a state of great excitement, and a confused sound of loud and angry voices pursued us to a considerable distance.

“ However, it seems they wisely determined to make the best of a bad business, and accordingly they deputed one of their party to get what he could out of the yacht. Captain Darcourt paid him liberally for the services of the portantini, but positively refused to contribute anything towards the support of their ‘tail;’ and finding that nothing more was to be extorted by fair words or foul, the chargé d’affaires took his leave and returned to Amalfi, like a discomfited

diplomatist, to give an account of his unsuccessful negotiation. It is not uncharitable to suppose that he took the precaution to deduct whatever he might be pleased to consider his own fair share of the booty, before he displayed the rest to the longing eyes of the harpies who were eagerly awaiting his return. Whether the remaining sum equalled their expectations or not has never yet been ascertained, but to judge from the inhuman yells that reached our ears, it may reasonably be inferred that the division of the spoils was not very amicably arranged.

“The next day we landed at Sorrento, and bidding adieu to the fair Maid of the Mist, we proceeded on mules to Castellamare, accompanied by our two Neapolitan friends, who eagerly seized the first opportunity of effect-

ing their escape from a party of pleasure, which, as they feelingly observed, had proved to them “un vero purgatorio.”

CHAPTER VII.

EMP. —————“ Surely thou wouldst not kill them !
Remember, my humanity's at stake,
And tyrant though I be, I were a fool
To lose the reputation of a saint.

PRINCE M. How well does clemency become a prince !
But shall all thoughts of vengeance, full and deep,
Be banished from thy soul ?

EMP. —————No,—trust me, no !—
Slowly but surely shall the poison work.
Far from their father-land, their bright blue sky,
In solitude and silence shall they waste
The morning of their days—the joyous prime
Of their existence. Pining in dark cells,
Long tedious years of anguish shall they mourn,
Fetter'd and famish'd. Fell disease shall steal
The roses from their cheeks, their youthful frames
Shall sink 'neath lingering tortures. Thus full sure
Shall I be freed from these my hated foes,
Yet gain the credit of humanity,
For dungeons tell no tales !”

FRANZ THE PHILANTHROPIST, OR THE
HORRORS OF SPIELBERG.—Old Play.

“ JUNE 19.—I have devoted the whole
of this morning to ‘ Francesca da Ri-

mini,' which interested me so deeply that I could not lay it down till I had finished it. It is indeed worthy of the noble genius and refined sentiments of its high-minded author.

“Who that has ever wept over the heart-rending details of ‘Le mie Prigioni’ could refrain from feeling the warmest interest in anything that the pen of Silvio Pellico might produce ?

“There is a touching simplicity, an almost superhuman meekness and resignation pervading every page of that charming little work, that wins insensibly upon the heart, and calls forth its deepest sympathy.

“But who would have believed that such cold-blooded barbarity, such savage inhumanity, could possibly exist in these civilized and enlightened days ! We start and recoil with horror from the

bare description of the bed of Procrustes or the bull of Phalaris ; while tortures not the less acute that they are refined with all the ingenuity of modern cruelty, are inflicted almost before our eyes, without exciting more than a passing remark, a cold and careless commiseration.

“Just before Pellico’s account of his captivity came out, I recollect meeting Count —— at a large dinner-party in London. He gave us a detailed and most interesting account of the cruelty exercised towards state-prisoners in the days of the Venetian republic, and asserted that these unfortunate men were placed in cells, or rather furnaces, called piombi, during the heat of summer. These prisons were small chambers with a southern aspect, and next to a roof of lead, which, when heated by an Italian sun, must become perfectly scorching.

The air swarmed with musquitoes, and the bed with other noisome insects, which, in spite of the suffocation he already endured, obliged the unhappy inmate to envelop himself in blankets in order to ward off their attacks.

“At the approach of winter the warmth of these cells was deemed far too great a luxury, and the wretched victim was then thrust down into a subterranean vault, where his feeble frame, enervated and weakened by the intense heat it had suffered, was exposed to the utmost severity of the opposite extreme.

“Most of the party who listened to this account, regarded it as one of those fables to which the mysterious nature and dark intrigues of this extraordinary government had given rise, and consoled themselves with the reflection that such gratuitous and useless acts of cruelty

would scarcely be committed even by the most profligate possessor of arbitrary power.

“ It was but a few days after this conversation that ‘*Le mie Prigioni*’ was put into my hands ; and there—in those pages which breathe such a spirit of genuine philanthropy and devoted patriotism—with what mingled feelings of astonishment and horror did I find, that the dark deeds of their predecessors are but too faithfully imitated by those who now rule the destinies of fallen Venice.

“ The accomplished and amiable author of ‘*Francesca da Rimini*,’ before he had even been found guilty of the offence laid to his charge,—the unpardonable crime of having dared to love his unhappy country,—was incarcerated in one of those dreadful *piombi* during the fervid heat of a Venetian summer and autumn ; but no

sooner did the snow appear on the surrounding hills, and the piercing tramontana begin to make itself felt, than he was transferred to a larger cell with a northern aspect, and exposed to a constant stream of air from two windows at the opposite extremities ; and there he was left to endure the rigours of a very severe winter. But a just idea of the horrors of this dungeon can best be formed from his own description of the sufferings he underwent there.

“ Those who have never been in Italy, and whose ideas of its climate are derived solely from the glowing descriptions of the poet or novelist, can form but a very inadequate conception of the severity of an Italian winter. The balmy gales and gentle zephyrs of the poet have to traverse the snow-clad chains of the Alps and Apennines ; and they only who have

shivered beneath the blast of a tramontana at Venice or Florence, can imagine what such an abode as that of Pellico must be during the winter months, without either fire or sun.

“It is reported of a Russian czar who visited Italy, that, astonished and petrified by the keen blast which made him long for his sables and his stoves, he exclaimed, ‘In my own country I have often seen the cold, but I never felt it till now!’

“Poor Maroncelli, the fellow-captive of Pellico in the dungeons of Spielberg, spent some little time at Florence, soon after his release, under the hospitable roof of the Marchesa,—whom I have the pleasure of knowing. She told me that one day at dinner, having been requested by some of the party to give an account of his imprisonment, he detailed, in a

most simple and affecting manner, the hardships and sufferings which he and his friend had undergone, without indulging in any acrimonious expressions against the authors of his misfortunes, or in any way exceeding the limits of ‘a plain, unvarnished tale.’

“Amongst the party who were assembled round the Marchesa’s table, there was a certain Signor Capitano, who was generally supposed to be a spy in the pay of the Austrian government. This gentleman was evidently much annoyed at Maroncelli’s narration; he fidgetted in his chair, looked vexed and angry, and every now and then exclaimed in an undertone to a Florentine noble who sat next him ‘Che bella cosa Signore! immaginazione! invenzione! che? è un romanzo caro mio,—niente più!’

“The gentleman thus addressed continued to listen attentively to the unpre-

tending sufferer, who in mild but energetic language was depicting the horrors of an Austrian dungeon, and giving a graphic and detailed account of the rigorous severity with which he and his companions in misfortune had been treated. His eyes filled with tears as the narrator proceeded to describe the dreadful effects of this barbarous system, which, after long years of solitude, and weary months of pain and anguish, had carried the young and noble Oroboni to an early grave within the prison-walls, without one relative to accompany his remains to the tomb, without one faithful friend of all who had known and loved him to drop the tear of affection over the bier of the youthful patriot !

‘ By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned.’

“ In bringing this heart-rending narration to a conclusion, Maroncelli glanced slightly at the protracted sufferings he had himself undergone, in a damp and noxious vault underneath the dungeon occupied by his friend,* the gradual decay of his health, and the loss of one of his limbs in consequence of the hardships he had to endure. He ended by expressing his sincere gratitude to the monarch who had at length restored him to the enjoyment of personal liberty, though mutilated and broken down in health and spirits by long confinement and premature decrepitude.

“ When the speaker was silent, at the conclusion of this tale of sorrow, his attentive auditor turned very gravely to

* Pellico says, “Io mi rappresentava Maroncelli giacente da sì lungo tempo in quel carcere tanto peggiore del mio ;” and we know what his own was !

the Captain, and said in a sarcastic tone, 'You do not believe this story, Signor Capitano ?'

" 'No, Sir ; not one word of it.'

" 'Nor do I,' replied the other ; 'no arguments shall ever convince me that Signor Maroncelli's wooden leg is really made of wood. Davvero immaginazione ! un romanzo, niente più, Signor Capitano !'

" This was more than the philosophy or effrontery of the Austrian spy could endure. He rose abruptly and retired, and in the breasts of those who remained behind, pity and contempt too strongly predominated to leave room for any feeling of well-merited indignation.

" Poor Maroncelli ! The gift of liberty was indeed to him but a cruel mockery, a bitter insult, from the hands of those whose ingenious barbarity had deprived

him of all power of enjoying it ; nor was he even allowed a resting-place wherein to repose in peace after so much suffering. On leaving Spielberg he had to pass through Ferrara, on his way to Rome, where he wished to rejoin his family, consisting of a venerable mother, two sisters, and a brother ; but hardly had he set foot in this legation than he was ordered to leave it instantly.

“ He then proceeded to Bologna, where he was treated in the same way.

“ At Florence, the Grand Duke seemed disposed to allow him a more hospitable reception, but he had not remained there long when the Austrian minister insisted upon his expulsion from that city also ; and in the meantime the papal government had received orders to banish his brother from Rome.

“ Hunted, like a wild beast, with insati-

able animosity from place to place, this unfortunate exile was at last obliged to abandon all hopes of a re-union with his family, after eleven long years of absence and captivity, during which he had not even been permitted to hear of their welfare.

“In his own touching and beautiful language he says, ‘ Non avendo più in Italia un solo palmo di terra che ardisse sostenermi, bisognò abbandonare di nuovo la cara patria !’

“As a last resource he took refuge in France, where he was kindly received and assisted by Louis Philippe ; and he is now trying to gain a livelihood by teaching languages in America.

“By a refinement in cruelty scarcely to be surpassed, the Austrian government, not content with the bodily sufferings inflicted upon its unhappy victims, con-

demns them to the still more harrowing mental torture of a state of total uncertainty as to the fate that awaits them.

“ During the whole period of his confinement the wretched prisoner is kept for months, and often for years, in utter ignorance of his final destiny.

‘ Vive, ma d’una vita
Di chi doman morrà.’

“ When at length relieved from the agonizing suspense which has enhanced the horrors of his captivity, and weakened, if not destroyed, all his powers both of mind and body, the ill-fated exile finds himself suddenly set at liberty, it is only to be banished to some foreign land, far from the friends of his youth—the home of his fond affections.

“ With spirits broken, and energies enfeebled by protracted sufferings, totally

destitute of resources, and incapable of procuring for himself that subsistence which his own unassisted exertions might once have obtained with facility and success—what is the barren gift of liberty to him ?

“ Yet vain and worthless as it is, it nevertheless appears to the despotic minister of Austria too rich a boon for *his* Italian subjects ! At the moment of bidding adieu to their gloomy cells, the hearts of the liberated captives sink within them; at the appalling uncertainty of their future fate. Incapacitated by long suffering for all active exertion, they come forth in utter ignorance of their immediate destination, dependent even for their daily bread upon the charity and humanity of their fellow-creatures. All they know is, that their implacable foe will never allow them to dwell again

in peace and tranquillity beneath their own blue sky ; nor will he even permit them to take a last fond look at the beloved haunts of their childhood, or to embrace once more their widowed wives and destitute children. This favour may possibly be denied from motives of humanity, (if indeed humanity can be supposed to exist in such a bosom !)—for heart-rending, even to a stranger, are the scenes of desolation and abject misery presented by the bereaved families of some of the best and bravest sons of Italy.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Le peuple Napolitain à quelques égards n'est point du tout civilisé ; mais il n'est point vulgaire à la manière des autres peuples. Sa grossièreté même frappe l'imagination.

“ Les chants, les danses, des jeux bruyans accompagnent tout ce spectacle, et il n'y a point de pays où l'on sente plus clairement la différence de l'amusement au bonheur.”—MADAME DE STAEL.

“ JUNE 23.—The more I see of the habits and manners of the lower classes amongst the Italians, the more am I struck by their frank goodnature, their real kindness of heart, and their unsuspecting openness.

“ I refer now more particularly to the Neapolitans, whose character I have had

frequent opportunities of studying since we have been rusticating at Castellamare.

“ This morning, on returning from the stables, where I had been with Arthur to see my poor Khaled, who was seized in the night with a violent attack of inflammation, I overheard my little Cameriera eagerly inquiring of the groom whether there were any hopes of the animal's recovery. He replied that he thought there was some chance, as the inflammation seemed to be gradually subsiding.

“ ‘ Benedetto sia Sant Antonio !’ exclaimed Marietta, with tears in her eyes. I could not help asking her why she was so thankful to St. Anthony for Khaled's temporary amendment, when the improvement might more justly be attributed to the zealous exertions of the groom, or the scientific treatment of the Marescalco ?

“ ‘ Che ?’ she replied indignantly, “ non può far niente quel briccone d’un Marescalco ! Sant’ Antonio ha fatto tutto !”

“ Upon further inquiry I found that this kind-hearted creature had spent some time in offering up prayers to St. Anthony in behalf of the suffering quadruped.

“ Without the slightest approach to undue familiarity, a Neapolitan servant scruples not to testify the lively interest he takes in all that concerns his master. He evidently rejoices when he sees him happy, and grieves when he appears sad, and one must indeed be a very stoic not to feel gratified by the interest that an honest heart displays in one’s trivial enjoyments and passing sorrows.

“ I am convinced that a much deeper and more practical feeling of religion

pervades the minds of the lower classes here than in England. The Roman-catholic religion, like the paganism of the ancients, “mingles itself with all the everyday occupations of life ; it is indeed interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or private life, with all the offices and amusements of society. It is a splendid and sumptuous worship ; it has its priesthood, its endowments, its temples. Statuary, painting, architecture, and music contribute their effect to its ornament and magnificence. It abounds in festival shows and solemnities, to which the common people are greatly addicted, and which are of a nature to engage them much more than any thing of that sort among us.”

“ Thus writes Paley ; and certainly it is a most faithful and vivid picture of

the catholicism of Italy at the present day.

“ It is this close connexion of their religion with their ordinary occupations and amusements, which gives the priesthood so great an influence over the minds of the people, and which, in spite of innumerable abuses and corruptions, still maintains the ascendancy of this powerful hierarchy. The religion of the Italian is not laid by, with his gala attire, for Sundays and high festivals, but enters into the commonest occurrences of his daily life. The outward forms by which he evinces an abiding sense of a superintending Providence may be termed superstition, or perhaps even idolatry, by those who do not understand the character of this highly-imaginative people. Doubtless the Christian religion is essentially spiritual and unearthly in its

character ; it is the religion of the heart, and not of external observances. But can we for a moment suppose, that any act by which man testifies his sense of personal weakness and dependence upon a superior being, can be displeasing to an omniscient and beneficent Creator ? In ignorance he may fail to seek the fountain-head, he may even offer up his prayers to a saint instead of to the only true Mediator between fallible mortals and their Creator ; and on entering the splendid temples of religion, he may form on his brow the mysterious sign of his Saviour's cross. This is doubtless superstition ; but do not these very superstitious observances tend to prove a consciousness of weakness, and a constant acknowledgment of a superintending Providence, too little evinced by more enlightened protestants ?”

“ June 28.—I have long wished to see a good specimen of the lively national dance of the Neapolitans, and my curiosity has now been amply gratified. This evening, as we were drinking tea upon the terrace in front of our villa, which is perched like an eagle’s nest upon the side of a steep rock overhanging the sea, our attention was attracted by sounds of mirth and peals of laughter, blended with the discordant tones of some most inharmonious instrument, apparently issuing from the stables, which are at no great distance from the house.

“ To remain where we were, in the patient endurance of such an uproar, without attempting to ascertain its cause, was more than our philosophy could submit to ; so with noiseless steps we glided unperceived to the door of the stables, and joined a small knot of spectators,

who, like ourselves, had been attracted by the unusual sounds, and were now busily engaged, by word and gesture, in applauding and animating the performers within.

“ Close to the heels of five horses were two grooms, the one playing on a ‘cem-balo,’ the other with his arms a-kimbo ; both fully occupied, heart and soul, in threading the intricate mazes of the tarantella. The chief performer had been, in his younger days, the most celebrated dancer in his native place, Sorrento, where he had long held, either by his own appointment or by patent from his legitimate sovereign, the distinguished post of ‘Cicerone di Madama Starke!’ Whether his own impudence or the royal favour entitled him to this honourable appellation, I am quite sure that her majesty of Sorrento could not have found amongst her subjects a fellow endowed

with a readier wit or a more agreeable pleasantry.

“The other figurante was a pupil of the primo ballerino, and it must be confessed that he did great credit to the scientific instructions of this veteran performer.

“But what most excited our astonishment was, that the heels of the five neglected quadrupeds did not take part in the ballet without waiting for an invitation. We could only suppose that, like the flayed eels, they were accustomed to it, and knew by experience that—

‘Levius fit patientia,
Quicquid corrigere est nefas.’

Even a horse must have the sense to perceive that no respect for time or place will prove any obstacle to a Neapolitan when bent upon dancing the tarantella.

“‘Like the dwelling-place of our in-

fancy revisited in manhood ; like the song of our country heard in a strange land,' the sound of this lively air produces upon a Neapolitan an effect wholly independent of the intrinsic merit of the harmony. The Ranz des Vaches may bring tears into the eyes of the sentimental Swiss peasant, when at a distance from his mountain home ; but the sound of the tarantella falling on the ears of the Neapolitan, not only conjures up to view his lovely bay and clear blue sky, but occasions an instantaneous and almost involuntary exhibition of agility, and sends him capering round the room, to the imminent danger of all old maidens' stands of china, or cabinets of antiques.

“ A lively Irish girl whom I met at Florence, told me that it was one of her favourite amusements to run to the

pianoforte and strike up the national air, just at the moment when Francesco (a servant who had accompanied them from Naples) was employed in removing the tea-things. The effect was irresistible. Afraid of letting fall the tea-tray with all its valuable contents, and yet unable to restrain the muscular movement produced by the sympathy of his fibres with the well-known sounds, Signor Francesco went sidling out of the room with the most ridiculous grimaces, and having safely deposited his burden, returned to expostulate with the fair musician who had placed him in such an awkward predicament. ‘ Oh, Signorina, vergogna, la prego di non suonar la tarantella, quando porto via il tè; mi fa pizzicare le gambe. Quando si sente quell’aria, non si può far altra cosa che ballare !’ ”

“ In spite, however, of the magic power of this popular air, the force of early habit is so great, that during Lent these conspiracies against the china and crockery always failed to produce the expected entertainment. The conscientious catholic got the better of the lively Neapolitan, and the only reply to the tempting music was, “ *Se vostra eccellenza mi comanda, v`a bene ;*” but without the order of his heretical padrone, the cautious catholic did not choose to incur any responsibility, by such a disregard of the due observance of *la quaresima*.”

“ July 2.—The poetical character of the Italians not unfrequently exhibits itself in sallies which might chance to occasion considerable embarrassment to the master of a house.

“ To give the name of a visitor or

guest is far too common-place a mode of announcement for a Neapolitan servant, who usually selects some peculiarity of manner or person, or some characteristic turn of expression, to designate the individual whose real appellation his own indolence easily enables him to forget.

“When on returning home from our ride this evening we were gravely informed that ‘*Quel Signor rosso, rosso,*’ had called during our absence,—we had not the least difficulty in guessing that our visitor could have been no other than a certain worthy neighbour of ours whose hair was more brilliant than his wits.

“The ingenuity often exhibited on these occasions by Neapolitan servants is really quite extraordinary. The nice distinctions they draw as to the age of a visitor, the wonderful acuteness with which they contrive to penetrate through

the well-stuffed surtout of an antiquated beau, or the auburn wig and borrowed hues of a faded beauty, render them most formidable enemies to the superannuated votaries of fashion. The porter of the palace in which we resided at Naples, used always, before presenting the cards that had been left in the course of the day, to give so graphic and lively a description of the various individuals who had done us the honour of calling, that any subsequent reference to the cards themselves would have been quite superfluous.

“ One gentleman, who was gradually approaching the grand climacteric of old-bachelorship, but who might still have passed for a young man with any ordinary observer, was always mentioned by our porter, in measured accents, as ‘ il Signor, po-co, po-co, vecchio.’

“A very kind old friend, who frequently took the trouble, in spite of his numerous infirmities, to ascend the appalling flight of stone stairs that led to our aerial abode on the terzo piano, was invariably designated as ‘il Signor vecchio, vecchio, vecchio ;’ and another of our visitors, who, strange as it may seem, had no Irish blood in his veins, obtained for himself the very distinguished title of ‘il Signor che dice, come state Agostino, domani mattina?’

“But amusing and laughable as this habit may at first appear to those who are unaccustomed to it, it may occasionally prove a source of very serious annoyance, and be attended with the most disagreeable consequences.

“An instance of this kind occurred not very long ago at the house of an English nobleman who had issued cards

for one of those magnificent entertainments, by means of which our countrymen so ingeniously strive to compensate for their temporary abnegation of the gaieties of London. The announcement of this fête excited universal joy amongst the unfortunate ennuyés, who had dragged on their cheerless existence throughout the livelong winter with the occasional assistance of a ball or rout, but totally unenlightened by anything half so brilliant as this was expected to be.

“Great were the preparations made by old and young for this scene of display; but more especially by a certain dowager, who, though still young and handsome, (in her own estimation at least,) had unluckily to act the part of chaperon to three daughters, who were unquestionably younger and handsomer still. Little

did this unfortunate lady dream of the calamity that was impending over her ! Little did she think, as she regarded with a smile of complacency the luxuriant ringlets of Truefitt's last and most successful effort, how soon her vanity was destined to receive its most signal overthrow !

“ Animated by the soft nothings of a second-rate man of fashion, who declared that the countess looked younger than her lovely daughter Lady Emily, she hastened to the scene of her anticipated triumphs.

“ The rooms were crowded with an endless variety of princes, dukes, and counts, of many nations, besides all the English whom rank and wealth placed amongst the number of our itinerant aristocracy. The style and title of the peeress were given in due form by the

attendant beau, and the party followed the steps of the groom of the chambers, armed for conquest and radiant with smiles.

“Totally forgetting the appellation of the Signora Contessa Inglese, the quick Neapolitan penetrated at a glance the outward defences of the antiquated beauty; to his keen eye she stood confessed the mother of the lovely group by which she was surrounded, and with a confused idea in his head of the consideration due to her exalted rank and advanced age, he threw open the folding doors with a pompous air, and in a tone of great solemnity announced ‘La Vecchia!’

“Almost suffocated with rage and mortification, the Countess entered the crowded drawing-room amidst a general buzz, which, in an assemblage of

foreigners, would doubtless have been attributed to malice, but amongst our charitable countrymen was of course nothing more than an expression of pity and commiseration. ‘Poor Lady ——,’ resounded on all sides in the most plaintive tones of condolence ;

‘ Ah miseram Eurydicen ! animâ fugiente vocabat,
Eurydicen, toto referebant ordine ripæ.’

“ To add to the difficulties of the noble host and hostess, who were endeavouring to soothe their offended guest, an old English squire, who had been torn away from his horses and dogs, and in a luckless hour had been worried into a foreign tour by his wife and daughters, now demanded a translation of the portentous phrase which seemed to have excited such a sensation throughout the room.

“ A good-natured friend, at some distance, afforded him an immediate explana-

tion, in a tone sufficiently audible not only to satisfy the old squire, who was exceedingly deaf, but all the rest of the company whose ignorance of the language had hitherto prevented them from entering into the joke.

“ This was more than the unfortunate peeress could endure. She left the house immediately, and at an early hour the following morning she bade adieu to Naples; and from a warm admirer of foreign society, she has now become a bigoted supporter of all that is English, and earnestly exhorts all young persons to rest contented with the enjoyments of home, and on no consideration to adventure themselves into that sink of popery and immorality, the Italian peninsula !

CHAPTER IX.

“It was one of those heads which Guido has often painted, mild, pale, penetrating,—free from all commonplace ideas of fat contented ignorance, looking downwards upon the earth; it looked forwards, but looked as if it looked at something beyond this world.”—STERNE’S MONK.

“ALBANO, July 28.—Having heard much of the famous Benedictine convent of Monte Cassino, we determined to visit it on our way from Naples to Albano, and therefore took the new line of road, or rather the ancient Via Latina, which has but recently been rendered passable for modern travellers.

“It abounds with scenery of a much

wilder though less beautiful character than the other route, winding through rugged and uncultivated mountains, and losing sight of the sea altogether, which forms such a lovely feature in the Terracina road. The inns too are little better than miserable hovels, and had we not carried a good stock of provisions with us, we must have been starved for want of food.

“ The convent of Monte Cassino stands on the summit of a mountain overhanging the little town of San Germano, about fifty miles from Naples. The ascent, which was long and fatiguing from its excessive steepness, we performed partly on donkeys, beneath the fervid heat of a Neapolitan noonday sun, which however, as we gained the summit, was considerably mitigated by a fine cool breeze.

“ The convent itself is an immense

building, capable of containing a far greater number of inhabitants than are now within its walls. The monks (of whom there are at present thirty) are all men of good family, or, as our guide expressed it, ‘*Hanno tutti eccellenza.*’ They have a large seminary of seventy or eighty pupils, besides a multitude of lay brothers and other attachés, forming altogether a very respectable little colony in this bleak and elevated situation, from whence they command a magnificent view of the surrounding country. Their prospect is bounded on one side by the noble chain of Calabrian Apennines, whose summits are covered with eternal snow, while at their feet the Garigliano meanders through verdant meadows and richly-wooded vales, till it mingles its limpid stream with the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

“The church of this convent is the most

perfect gem of the kind that can possibly be conceived, and may really be said to rival in richness the famous chapel of the Medici. The interior is completely lined with pietra-dura, in the most beautiful and variegated forms ; and the sacristy and choir are adorned with curious and elaborate carved work in oak and walnut wood. The original church was built by St. Benedict, time out of mind, but it has been twice destroyed, and the present edifice is only allowed the antiquity of four or five centuries, even by the cicerone himself. The convent could once boast some good pictures, but the French happened to take a fancy to them, and they have never returned from Paris.

“ On coming out of the church we were accosted by a pale thin monk, of most prepossessing appearance, who asked Arthur if he had been educated at

Oxford. Upon his replying in the affirmative, he inquired if he knew a certain Mr. ——, who belonged to that university, and had visited Monte Cassino some years ago? He seemed much disappointed when Arthur told him that he had never heard of such a person; but after a few moments' consideration, he begged that we would take charge of a letter for this gentleman, and deliver it as soon as we returned to England. He then hurried away to prepare his despatch, and we saw him no more, being ourselves in great haste to depart, as we had still some distance to go that evening. The letter was brought to us by a panting little barefooted messenger, just as we were preparing to recommence our journey. The direction was simply, 'To the Rev. ——, Oxford;' and as it was left unsealed, I thought it very possible that

the writer had no objection to our reading it. De Vere protested loudly against this dishonourable conduct, as he called it ; but Edith and I were resolved for once to judge for ourselves, and we were amply rewarded for our obstinacy. It was indeed a most beautiful and touching letter—an outpouring of ardent feelings and warm affections long repressed. Oh, why should such a heart be doomed to pine in the solitude of a cloister ? Why should a mind so refined and cultivated, a disposition so formed for the enjoyment of social life, be left to prey upon itself, or to perish in the gloom and monotony of a convent ?

“ Anything, however common-place and uninteresting, sounds charming in the sweet language of Italy ; but this monk’s letter was exquisitely written, and yet so simple, so unstudied—the natural

effusion of an energetic and imaginative mind. It went to my heart, and yet I knew not why.

“How deeply did we all regret, that we had not sacrificed anything rather than lose such an opportunity of conversing with this interesting man, and of forming perhaps a friendship with him that might have led to a most valuable correspondence.

“Bitterly lamenting our precipitancy, we pursued our way towards Ceprano, a frontier town of the papal territories, where our passports were examined, and our trunks, or rather our purses, ransacked.

“The next day’s journey, to Valmontone, was very stupid and uninteresting, except just the latter part, where the scenery underwent a total change, and became as picturesque and lovely as it

had previously been bleak and barren. Here we passed for some miles through a richly-wooded valley; the roadside was adorned with a profusion of wild flowers, especially the broom, which quite gilded the hedges with its brilliant blossoms, and scented the air with its delicious odour. The nightingales too were singing delightfully, and the cool breezes of evening were most refreshing after the heat and dust of the day.

“Those beautiful lines of Scott’s recurred to my mind, as peculiarly applicable to the scene before me :—

‘The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wafted around their rich perfume.’

“A very different lot awaited us at our journey’s end, and all ideas of beauty and romance were quickly put to flight by the wretched dirty hovel in which we

found ourselves condemned to pass the night.

“The civility and attention of the people had hitherto made amends in some degree for the miserable accommodation they gave us, but here we were treated with such insolence and ferocity that we began to think we had fallen into a nest of brigands, and might possibly awake in the morning with our throats cut!

“The whole of this road is, from its wild and unfrequented state, so admirably adapted to favour the safety and success of banditti, that were it not for horse-patrols established at regular distances the whole way, few travellers would venture to attempt a route so fraught with danger. As it is, we got off much better than we expected, and had no serious evil to encounter

beyond that of a temporary starvation, our own provisions being exhausted, and this inhospitable inn not even furnishing a crust of bread. When at last we reached Albano after a fast of twenty-eight hours, we were so ravenously hungry, that we could not refrain from plundering the orange-trees as we walked through the garden towards the lovely villa which Arthur had engaged for our summer retreat."

" July 29.—I found a note awaiting my arrival, from the Marchesa D——, containing a most pressing invitation to me to spend a few weeks with her at her villa at Frascati.

" For many reasons I think it best to accept this invitation, though my doing so is a real act of self-denial. But I feel that I must sooner or later tear myself away from the society of one who

is becoming far too necessary to my existence. I must try if life can be endured without him, for, alas ! I cannot, I dare not hope for a perpetuity of such happiness as I have enjoyed for the last two months. It was all too bright to continue ! It was a delicious dream,—a meteor gleam of golden light across my lonely path,—glorious and dazzling for a moment, but too brilliant, far too radiant to endure ! I feel a strange sinking at my heart,—a foreboding of coming evil, just as I felt that last sad evening at Rome, when lingering amid the ruins of the Coliseum for the *last* time, as I then firmly believed. Yet I am now within fifteen miles of that very spot, with every probability of often revisiting it !

“ It is folly and weakness to have faith in such presentiments, the wayward fancies of an over-excited mind ; but yet

I cannot altogether dispel them, and in an hour of gloom and depression like the present they will fearfully intrude themselves on my spirit, despite the sounder reasonings of a happier mood.”

CHAPTER X.

“ Affections trampled on, and hopes destroyed,
Tears wrung from very bitterness, and sighs
That waste the breath of life,—these all were hers
Whose image is before me.” L. E. L.

“ Alas ! we trace
The map of our own paths,—and long ere years
With their dull steps the brilliant lines efface,
On sweeps the storm, and blots them out with tears ;
That home was darkened soon.” F. HEMANS.

POOR Edith ! how delighted she was to escape from the turmoil and gaieties of Naples to the peaceful shades of her beautiful villa at Albano. It was so natural to her to live amid the calm repose of trees and flowers, that she felt as if she were at home once more, after a long

and wearisome endurance of great cities, with their heartless society and tedious dissipation. And though she hardly liked to confess it, even to her own heart, yet it certainly added not a little to her happiness to think that Gertrude was going to spend some weeks at Frascati, and that she should then have Arthur all to herself again. How she would exert herself to amuse him ! how delighted she would be to make him confess that a tête-à-tête was far pleasanter than a trio !

Alas for her dreams of happiness ! Arthur was of a totally different opinion. In vain did she call forth all her powers of pleasing, in vain did she struggle to conceal her mortification and disappointment. From the day of Gertrude's departure he appeared an altered being,—gloomy, morose, and alike incapable of pleasing or of being pleased.

If Edith looked vexed and sad, he said she was a dead weight on his spirits ; if she tried to laugh and talk, he complained that she was so childish and frivolous that she was not a fit companion for any sensible man.

One morning when they were sitting together, after breakfast, she took out her guitar, and began to sing his favourite song " Addio Teresa."

" Oh, pray sing something else," he exclaimed, impatiently, " I cannot bear that song."

" Why, dearest, I thought you were so fond of it. You are always asking Gertrude to sing it."

" Ah, that is quite a different thing ; it does not suit your voice. Besides, I have got a bad headache, and music bores me to death."

He rose and left the room ; and Edith soon after saw him pass by the windows,

mounted on her little Calabrese pony. She watched him with tearful eyes till the last glimpse of Bianco's long flowing tail was lost amid the thick foliage of the oak and ilex, and then she turned away with a heavy heart, to wander alone in her deserted garden—deserted by him whose presence was as sunshine to her path, and without whom it was to her but a dreary wilderness.

He had left a message that she should not wait dinner for him, and it was late in the evening before he returned. She could but too easily divine where he had spent the day, but she purposely forbore to inquire, as she felt that she could not bear to have her suspicions confirmed; and the native delicacy of her sensitive mind shrank from the bare allusion to what she now began to feel must be henceforth a forbidden subject between them.

Day after day was passed in the same manner, till a month had rolled on—oh! how heavily—over Edith's head! Her mornings were spent in vain efforts to dispel the dark cloud whose murky shadows had chased the last faint gleam of sunshine from her breast; and her evenings wore away in long and painful watchings for the return of him who, in spite of coldness, indifference, and neglect, was still fondly and faithfully loved with that meek and much-enduring affection which a woman's heart alone can feel. She would pace up and down her terrace walk with that anxious restlessness which knows no repose, listening with nervous intensity to every sound, and starting at the noise of the rustling leaves as the cool night breeze swept over them. Her eager eye would strive to pierce

through the shades of the surrounding foliage, to catch the first glimpse of Bianco, as the moonbeams shone upon his glossy snow-white skin ; and then she would fly to meet her husband, and try to welcome him home with smiles—those tearful smiles wherewith the bursting heart strives in vain to mask its misery.

It could not last,—this bitter conflict between love and despair ; that gentle spirit could ill endure the slow-consuming pangs of blighted hopes and crushed affections.

“ She had given
Her all to a most fragile bark, to love ;
’Twas wrecked, wrecked by love’s treachery.”

Oh who can tell the agonies of a young and trusting heart, when first it finds itself betrayed—when its bright dreams of love and happiness vanish, and it awakens to a sense of utter desolation.

Poor Edith ! This was her first cup of sorrow, and it was her last. Those who have borne such woe can bear no more. Either they sink under it and are at rest, or else their hearts grow callous by long endurance, and are steeled alike against grief or joy.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Love is like the glass
That throws its own rich colour over all,
And makes all beautiful. The morning looks
Its very loveliest, when the fresh air
Has tinged the cheek we love with its glad red ;
And the hot noon flits by most rapidly,
When dearest eyes gaze with us on the page
Bearing the poet's words of love. And then,
The twilight walk, when the linked arms can feel
The beating of the heart. Upon the air
There is a music never heard but once—
A light, the eyes can never see again ;
Each star has its own prophecy of hope,
And every song and tale that breathe of love
Seem echoes of the heart.”

L. E. L.

EXTRACTS FROM GERTRUDE'S DIARY.

“ FRASCATI, August 7.—Do I dream,
or can it indeed be a reality ? Oh, if this
life were made up of such realities, who
would ever wish for aught beyond it ?

What could be desired beyond this earthly paradise, — an Italian heaven above, and a kindred heart beneath! This has been to me a day of perfect happiness, spent in wandering through these lovely woods, with him whose presence alone could make a desert beautiful.

“ We confided to each other unreservedly every thought and feeling, and it was curious to see in how many instances our hearts had beat in unison, even when we least suspected such sympathy. He confessed to me with what difficulty he had torn himself away from Florence, and how often he had assumed that air of coldness and reserve (which I used to find so repulsive and yet so piquant) as a mask to conceal from me the feelings he could scarcely repress.

“ How strange it was that I could be so

blindly infatuated as to believe him devoted heart and soul to Edith! How strange that it never occurred to me for a moment, that he could take any interest in me, except as her friend! And now that it is too late, I know it all! Now that he is lost to me for ever, I find that his heart is mine, and mine only!”

“*Frascati*.—I have forbidden Arthur to come here again till Tuesday, when he is to take me back to Albano. I cannot but feel pleased with myself for this heroic act of self-denial; for such I may truly call it. But my conscience has reproached me for some days past when I have thought of Edith. She must either be very good or very indifferent, if a spark of jealousy has never yet been kindled in her heart by Arthur’s too evident preference for my society. Poor girl! she is indeed a very unfit companion

for him ; his character is infinitely beyond her comprehension ; and her calm and passive disposition is so totally at variance with his ardent and enthusiastic temperament, that it is impossible she can ever make him happy.

“ Had she ever betrayed the least symptom of uneasiness on account of my intimacy with Arthur, I should have been more guarded for the future ; but it is evident to me, from her very blindness and indifference to it, that her affection for him is of that tranquil and imperturbable nature which cannot easily be ruffled. I may therefore take the more merit to myself for the sacrifice I have just made. I will not say I would fain recall it ; and yet, what a wilderness will this lovely place be to me for the next four lonely days ! Every path, every flower will speak to me of him ; yet I

shall not see him nor hear his voice !
Oh ! if these four days without him are
so insupportable, how could I endure an
eternal separation ?”

CHAPTER XII.

“The face was young still, but its happy look
Was gone ; the cheek had lost its colour, and
The lip its smile ; the light that once had play’d
Like sunshine in those eyes was quenched and dim,
For tears had wasted it ; her long fair hair
Floated upon her forehead in loose waves,
Unbraided ; and upon her pale thin hand,
Her head was bent as if in pain.” L. E. L.

THE day appointed for Gertrude’s return to Albano had arrived, and Arthur announced to Edith at breakfast, that he should drive over to Frascati early, and bring her back in the cool of the evening, in order to avoid the heat of the day. “As I know the Marchesa is no favourite of

yours," added he, "I suppose you would not wish to accompany me."

"Oh, no, indeed," replied Edith; "I do not feel very well to-day, and I would much rather stay at home."

And she spoke the truth, for she dreaded to encounter the gaze of strangers, lest they should read in her pale cheeks and altered looks the secret of the gnawing worm within.

How was it that this secret had escaped her husband's penetration, when even her maid could not refrain from expressing her anxious fears on the subject? Alas! when the eyes are wilfully blinded, and the heart closed and seared, those we once loved best on earth may die at our feet, before we allow ourselves to believe their danger.

The greater part of that morning was spent by Edith in considering how she

ought to act towards Gertrude for the future. It would be the height of hypocrisy to treat her with an affection and cordiality she could no longer feel towards her ; and yet she thought she had no right to condemn her for being, perhaps, the unsuspecting cause of all her sufferings. Was it Gertrude's fault that Arthur loved her ? Or was she not rather herself to blame for having thrown them so much together, and thus blindly encouraged an intimacy fated to destroy the happiness of all parties ?

The native ingenuousness of her disposition soon decided the course she was to pursue, and taking up her pen, she wrote to her friend with all the candour and sincerity of her trusting heart. After describing with the most touching simplicity the misery she had undergone for some time past, in witnessing the gradual

estrangement of her husband's affections, she added, "I do not blame you, Gertrude; I know too well how delightful it is to be loved—to feel oneself necessary to the happiness of another—to live but in the presence of the beloved one. It is an unreal state of existence—an enchantment which obliterates all other thoughts from the mind.

"You have not seen my sufferings—you know not the days and nights of bitter agony that you have caused me, or your heart would have bled for me. I believe you still love me, Gertrude—I believe you would not willingly make me miserable; and I am sure I could not give you a stronger proof of my affection for you, than by humbling myself so far as to make this confession. God grant you may never know the bitterness of such grief as that which you have uncon-

sciously inflicted upon your unhappy friend,
“EDITH.”

Having thus relieved her mind of a part of the burden that oppressed it, she went out to saunter through the woods, where she usually spent her solitary mornings, with a volume of Scott or Shakspeare to wile away the weary hours. She threw herself down on the turf, beneath the grateful shade of a venerable oak, and tried to read; but it would not do. Her eye rested on the page before her, but her mind was far away. As she listlessly turned over the leaves, her attention was arrested by a passage in the “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” in which Helen complains of the ingratitude of her favourite friend :—

“Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

The sister vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us—O, and is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood, innocence?"

"Just so it was with Gertrude and me," thought Edith. "She whom I loved as a sister—my first, my only friend; she who risked her life to save mine, is now become my most cruel enemy! My life! What thanks do I owe her for the worthless gift,—worthless, since she has robbed me of his love. Oh why did she not leave me to perish then, and spare me all this misery! Better, oh better far, to die in the quick-consuming fires of fever, than amid the lingering tortures of a broken heart!

'What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love,—so fortunate,
But miserable most to love, unlov'd?
This you should rather pity than despise.'

"Ay, miserable most to love, un-

lov'd,' " she repeated, half aloud " this is misery indeed! I could bear anything but this. To have been loved—to know and prize the blessing—to live upon it—to hug it to my heart of hearts as I did—and then to have it torn from me! to be widowed, desolate,—ay, worse than widowed—for his spirit would then be ever near, and I should feel his presence, though viewless. Oh, a glance of that altered eye, how it pierces my very soul! The harsh tones of that voice which was once all tenderness, how I dread to hear them! And yet how I long for his return, after one of these weary days of loneliness. How my heart beats as he approaches,—how I love the very sound of his footstep. Hark! did I not hear it even then? But no; it cannot be! I have yet six long hours to wait."

Again she heard the sound of ap-

proaching footsteps, and fearful of encountering the intrusive gaze of a stranger, she rose up, and was hastening down the bank towards the lake, when a well-known voice pronounced her name, and in another moment Lord Annandale was by her side.

Poor Edith! she turned away to hide the tears which she could not restrain; but the very effort she made to repress her feelings only rendered them the more uncontrollable; and when Lord Annandale spoke to her in that tone of tender yet respectful interest which always marked his manner towards her, she could command herself no longer, but wept as if her heart would break.

Annandale took her arm within his, and tried to soothe her; but he was shocked to see how pale and ill she looked, and could not but fear that some

deeply-rooted sorrow, some rankling grief within, was preying upon her fragile frame. With true delicacy and refinement he forbore to probe the wound by inquiring the cause of her distress ; but as soon as she was in some degree restored to composure, he conversed gaily and freely upon other subjects, and tried to interest her in his Sicilian adventures. He had just left Palermo, and was passing through Albano, on his way northwards, intending to spend the winter at Vienna. Sicily proved a fruitful topic of conversation. The laborious ascent of Mount Etna—the superb ruins of Girgenti—the ovation of the tunny-fish through the streets of Palermo, garlanded with flowers and heralded by drums ; and the gay festa of Santa Rosalia, with her stupendous machinery of fireworks, and gaudy triumphal car, not unlike that

of Jaggernaut, of Hindoo celebrity, except that it is adorned with white saints instead of black idols ;—all these he described with so much spirit and animation, that, in spite of herself, Edith's interest was excited, and for a few brief moments she forgot her misery.

“ Is De Vere likely to be at home soon ? ” at length inquired Lord Annandale, “ for I must try and get on to Rome to-night. ”

“ Oh, must you indeed leave us so soon ! ” exclaimed Edith. “ I thought you would at least stay here till to-morrow. You will not see Arthur if you do not, for he never returns home till quite late. ”

“ *Never* returns till late ! What ! do you let him run away from you in this way every day ? ”

“ He is very fond of riding, ” replied

Edith, evasively, "and the cool of the evening is the best time to enjoy it here."

"He seems to be enjoying the heat of the morning as well as the cool of the evening," thought Annandale; but he had the tact to keep his thoughts to himself.

"But why need you be in such a hurry?" persisted Edith; "there is so much that is beautiful to be seen in this neighbourhood."

"If I thought that my staying here could afford you one moment's pleasure, believe me, I would gladly give up everything for such a gratification—a gratification far greater to myself than it could possibly be to you. But you have given me only too much reason to suppose that my presence is disagreeable to you. You evidently shunned my society at Naples,

and treated me with a degree of coldness and reserve that wounded me to the very quick. Oh, Edith, what have I done to deserve such unkindness? Did you not promise me the privilege of your friendship, when you crushed my fondly-cherished hopes of a far richer boon? And have I ever infringed by a look or a word upon the strictest limits of that compact? Is it a crime in your eyes that I once presumed to love you?—that I dared to indulge a wish to be something more to you than a friend?”

Edith was too much agitated to answer; she leant against a tree for support, and covered her face with her trembling hands, through which the tears fell in torrents. The tender accents of kindness and affection overpowered her. They had once been familiar to her as the air she breathed; she would have thought

she could as soon have existed without the one as without the other. Alas ! she had yet to learn, that life must still be borne when all that blessed it is departed.

“Dearest Edith,” exclaimed Annandale, “forgive me if I have distressed you. You are not well, I am sure you are not. Lean on me, and let me take you home. May I,” added he, half doubtingly, “may I, without presuming too far on my privilege as a friend, venture to ask if Lady Fitzgerald has any idea how ill you are looking, how wretchedly altered since she last saw you ?”

“My mother !” exclaimed Edith, hurriedly ; “oh, do not, for pity’s sake, tell her that I am ill—it would make her so unhappy, and could do me no good.”

“Edith, forgive my anxiety, but you require the care and attention of a mother. I am sure you do. Perhaps I

ought not to tell you so, but indeed I could not have believed it possible that these few weeks could have wrought such a fearful change in your appearance."

"It is the hot weather," replied Edith. "I never could bear much heat. I shall feel better when it gets cooler. I was quite worn out with all we went through at Naples."

"At any rate, you must allow me to tell De Vere what I think of you. In common justice to him I must do so ; for being always with you, it cannot strike him as it does me."

"Oh, Lord Annandale, if you have any regard for me, say nothing about me to Arthur, I entreat you. You could not possibly do me a greater unkindness—indeed, indeed, you could not. He is resolved, at all events, to spend another

year in Italy, so it would be of no use to say anything," she added, half musingly.

"No use!" exclaimed Annandale. "What then, do you really wish to return to England?"

"Oh yes, I long to see my own dear home once more. But Gertrude wishes to remain here; it is quite different with her, she has no home to bind her heart to England."

"Gertrude! Good heavens! What right has she to interfere with your wishes? Is it possible that she can presume to detain De Vere in Italy contrary to your inclination? Edith, from the first moment I found Miss Alymer with you at Rome, I foresaw all the consequences that would probably ensue from such an intimacy. I saw it all; I tried to put you on your guard, but you scornfully rejected my warning."

“ Excuse me, Lord Annandale, but this is indeed overstepping the privileges of friendship ; I must hear no more of this.”

“ Edith, I must speak ; I will risk even your displeasure if by so doing I can hope to save you from the misery that awaits you. I see it all too clearly ; I can guess but too well the cause of your altered looks. The world knew it long ago. It made my blood boil to hear the things that were said at Naples. If you had been my sister I would not have borne it. Hush ! do not interrupt me ; if you were not still dear to me as a sister, and oh ! far dearer too, I could not undertake the ungrateful task ; but I can bear anything, submit to anything, except to see you suffer. Edith, you *must* return to England, and that too immediately ; it is your bounden duty to do so—it is your duty as a wife, independently of your feel-

ings as a woman, to break off this intimacy at once, and entirely. Can you submit tamely to the loss of your husband's affections? can you endure to be trampled on and insulted by the artful woman who presumes to call herself your friend? Oh, Edith, rouse yourself to act with proper spirit and dignity, and believe me it is the only way to ensure your husband's happiness and your own."

"Lord Annandale, this is wanton cruelty—indeed it is. I am already sufficiently humbled and bowed down, even to the very dust, without the additional mortification of hearing that I am an object of pity and contempt to you and to the world. I thank you for your commiseration, but should thank you still more for your forbearance."

"Edith, this bitterness is not like yourself; evil rest on those who goaded your

gentle spirit to this harshness. You know that I can have no other object in view than your happiness, in all that I have said. Will you not listen to me? Will you not do me the justice to attend to what I have to say?"

"Allow me first to ask, my lord, what right you have to take it for granted that I am unhappy. I am not aware that I ever said anything that could authorize you to suppose it. Were I the only person whom these insinuations might concern, I could more easily pardon them, in consideration of the kind though mistaken motives that prompted them; but I cannot and will not listen to anything that can in the remotest degree implicate my husband. It was in compliance with my earnest request, that Miss Aylmer consented to remain with us when her friends returned to England, and it would be most ungenerous in me were I to

allow myself to be prejudiced against her by the idle gossip of a malicious world."

"Forgive me, Edith, if I have offended you. I will say no more, except to entreat you at all events to send for your mother, if you are determined not to return home. Her presence might prove the greatest blessing to you. Will you then only promise me this, and I shall leave you with less anxiety?"

"Indeed, I shall make no rash promises," replied Edith, forcing a mournful smile. "My poor mother is the worst traveller in the world, and a journey to Rome would lay her up for a year; so that it would be most selfish in me to put her maternal affection to such a test."

"So then, you refuse me even this request? Farewell, Edith, and may God bless you!"

"Nay, we part not in anger, I trust?"

“Not in anger, Edith, but in sorrow. You will find on your table a little Sicilian song, which I am particularly fond of ; may I hope that you will sometimes think of me when you are singing it to your guitar ? I left it there, fearing that I might not be so fortunate as to meet you. Once more, farewell.”

He pressed her hand to his lips, and then hurried away to conceal his emotion. Edith watched him till he was out of sight, and then sat down and wept bitterly. Womanly pride and a sense of injured dignity had supported her as long as Annandale was by her side ; but now that she was alone, unseen, unheard, she might relieve her bursting heart, and indulge in the sad luxury of tears.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Oh, quanto amaro
M'è il vivere solinga !”

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

“ Ah ne faut il pas pardonner aux cœurs des femmes les regrets déchirans qui s'attachent à ces jours ou elles étaient aimées, ou leur existence était si nécessaire à l'existence d'un autre, lorsqu'à tous les instans elles se sentaient soutenues et protégées ? Quel isolement doit succéder à ces temps de délices !”—CORINNE.

It was late in the evening of that same day. Edith was sitting alone by the open window of her drawing-room, inhaling the delicious perfume of the oleander and cape jessamine, and yielding to the soothing influence of the twilight hour, which,

by a magic all its own, can call up sweet visions of the past, and make us "live in an atmosphere of other days." She was startled from her reverie by the gardener's little black-eyed boy, who had crept cautiously up to the window as if afraid of disturbing her, and then, unable any longer to repress his satisfaction, he exclaimed with a grin of delight, which displayed two rows of whitest ivory, "Ecco Signora, ecco il libro che il Signor aveva perduto ; l'ho trovato io, sotto il gran cipresso la giù nel giardino."

Edith had heard Arthur making inquiries for his lost sketch-book, and it struck her that he had appeared unusually anxious to recover it. She opened it listlessly, and as she turned over the leaves a loose scrap of paper fell out, on which were written a few lines in pencil, in Arthur's well-known hand.

The words "My own dearest Gertrude" immediately caught her eye, and she could not resist the impulse that urged her, as it were in spite of herself, to read on.

"My own dearest Gertrude,
"Why will you take this cruel delight in tormenting me and yourself too? for (whatever you may say) my heart tells me that this needless separation must be almost as painful to you as it is to me. Indeed, I can endure it no longer, for without you life becomes wholly insupportable."—

The rest had been torn off. But was not this enough for Edith? Ay, and more than she could bear. This was the death-blow to her stricken soul,—this was the thunderbolt that laid her prostrate on the earth. For some moments

she stood as if rooted to the spot, her lips closely compressed, her eyes glaring wildly on the fatal paper ; the current of her blood seemed to stagnate in her veins, and her heart almost ceased to beat.

A sound of approaching footsteps roused her from this state of deathlike stupor. She darted through the window, and rushed on with the impetuosity of a maniac, till she found herself in a copse of tangled brushwood on the banks of the lake. It was one of those delicious nights, such as Italy alone can boast. The deep blue waters of the lake seemed to slumber in their rocky cradle, “ calm as a child’s repose ;” and all around was bathed in one rich flood of silvery light, save where the massy foliage of the oak and ilex, or a projecting fragment of rock, cast a dark shadow upon the turf.

It was on just such a night as this that she had first listened to Arthur's vows of love. The same bright orb that then shone on the Leama's crystal stream was now reflected in Albano's tranquil waters ; but oh, what a change had come o'er the spirit of her dream since that blissful night ! It seemed but as yesterday that he had first clasped her to his heart, and poured forth passionate vows of unalterable love ; and now she was neglected, forsaken, alone, utterly alone, in a foreign land, far from the home of her childhood, from the mother who adored her, with none to comfort, none to weep with her, betrayed by the friend in whom she trusted, insulted by the husband whom she idolized !

Wearied and utterly exhausted by the violence of her emotions, she threw her-

self down upon the mossy turf, and gazed with unconscious eyes upon the heavenly scene around her. She had not remained there long when her attention was rivetted by the soft tones of a voice which once was music to her ear, but whose persuasive tenderness was now poured forth for another.

“Is it not lovely?” exclaimed Gertrude.

“With *you*, most lovely,” was the gently-murmured reply; “but oh, what a desert has it seemed to me during these last four miserable days! My own best beloved, how could you leave me? how could you condemn me to such utter wretchedness?”

“Oh, Arthur, do not talk so. Remember Edith.”

“Remember her! Good heavens, how can I forget her? Is she not the curse

of my life, the bane of my existence !
Were it not for her, I might now be
happy with you !”

Edith heard no more ; a deadly faintness came over her, and she was spared the rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Perduta

Ho una donna, e sei tu ; di te parlava,
 Di te piangea ; te amava ; te sempre amo ;
 Te amerò sino all'ultim' ora ! e s'anco
 Dell'empio amor soffrir dovessi eterno
 Il castigo sotterra, etemamente
 Più e più sempre, t'amerò !”

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

“ This hour we part,—my heart foreboded this ;
 Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.”

CORSAIR.

It was not till a late hour that Gertrude and Arthur returned from their moonlight ramble, and finding the drawing-room deserted, they concluded that Edith had retired to her own room.

“ I had no idea it could be so late,”

exclaimed Gertrude, as the time-piece struck eleven. "Would you believe it? We have positively been walking more than two hours! Edith must have wondered what was become of us."

"I have no doubt she never troubled herself to think about us," replied De Vere. "I see Annandale has been here; there is his card. And what is this?" added he, taking up a piece of manuscript music. "'A Sicilian song, copied for Mrs. De Vere, by her obliged friend, Annandale!' I wonder what sort of a thing it is. Do try it, dearest. I must have one little song before I say good night."

"I cannot find the guitar. What can Edith have done with it? Do see if it is in the summer-house."

While Arthur flew to execute her commission she turned to the table to look

over the song, when a note directed to her in Edith's hand-writing immediately attracted her attention. She tore it open, and with a beating heart and stricken conscience she glanced over its contents. Reproaches she could have borne, for she felt that she deserved them ; but that mild forbearance, that touching kindness, pierced her to the very soul !

When Arthur returned with the lost guitar, he found her weeping and sobbing as if her heart would break. He threw himself on the sofa beside her, and entreated her to tell him the cause of her grief. She put the letter into his hand, but could not speak, for tears choked her utterance. No sooner had he read it, than he tore it into a thousand pieces, and throwing them on the ground, he stamped upon them as if he would fain

have annihilated each fragment. Then walking rapidly up and down the room, evidently labouring under the influence of strong and deep emotions, he muttered between his clenched teeth, “detestable jealousy—vile, suspicious disposition—the meanness of a grovelling narrow-minded spirit.”

Gertrude heeded him not, for she was absorbed in her own reflections, her face hidden in her hands, as if to conceal the burning blushes of a guilty conscience. But when, at length, he approached her, and passing his arm round her waist, he pressed her fondly to his side, and tried to soothe her grief, she disengaged herself hastily from his grasp, and with a desperate effort, summoning all her fortitude to meet the trial, she exclaimed, “No, Arthur, this must not be! Edith is right. I do not deserve her kindness. We

must part at once, and"—she would have said "for ever," but the words died on her lips.

She moved towards the door, but Arthur perceiving her intention, sprang forward to prevent her. "Are you mad, Gertrude!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible that you can intend to humour that spoilt child's absurd caprices, at the expense of your own reputation? What will people say if you leave my house in this way, and throw yourself upon the tender mercies of the world?"

"Let them say what they will," replied Gertrude, "they cannot say worse of me than I deserve. Oh, Arthur, I can never forgive myself for having caused her all this misery. Let me repair my error, while I have yet the strength to do so. You know your power, alas! too well; but in mercy do

not exert it. It is hard enough to say farewell ; oh do not add to my wretchedness !”

“ My own precious Gertrude, do you think I can bear to give you up in this manner ? Am I to be made miserable for life, to gratify the ridiculous jealousy of that foolish girl ? Is it not enough to be chained for the rest of my existence to a woman who has neither the power nor the will to make me happy, and must I be deprived of the only consolation I can ever hope to find — your friendship, your affection ?

“ Oh, Arthur, she will try to make you happy when I am gone. She loves you tenderly ; indeed, indeed she does,— though, perhaps, she loves not as I could love.”

“ No ; it is not in her calm, cold nature to love as I would be loved ! Mad-

man, fool that I was, ever to fancy myself bound to her by any ties but those of a mistaken sense of honour ! From the moment that I first knew you, my heart told me that we were made for each other—that you were the only woman on earth who could ever make me happy. I knew it—I saw the treasure within my grasp, and threw it from me ! Oh folly ! infatuation ! bitterly, ay, eternally, must I rue it !”

“ It is too late now to think of what might have been. But though our happiness is sacrificed for ever, let us not add to our sorrows the stings of an accusing conscience ; for oh, Arthur, all other grief is light when compared with that !”

“ Then you do not love me, Gertrude. I have been deluding myself with false hopes, but I am doomed to be cruelly un-

deceived. You do not, you cannot love me, or you would not abandon me to utter, hopeless wretchedness. Gertrude, on my kness I implore you not to leave me. Stay, oh stay, I entreat you, if not for my sake, at least for your own ; for I solemnly vow that not one hour will I remain under this roof after you have left it. I care not what becomes of me, but follow you I must and will, even if it be only to die at your feet.”

“ Arthur, this is not like yourself. It is cruel and ungenerous thus to take advantage of my weakness and helplessness. Your house is no longer a fit home for me—I must leave it—though Heaven only knows what this resolution may cost me. Perhaps it had been better for both of us had I never entered it.”

“ And where then would you go? Young and inexperienced as you are—

to be left alone in a foreign country, without a friend or protector at hand—what will become of you? No; I could not allow it. Remember, Gertrude, that when you left the friends with whom you were travelling, you put yourself under my protection; and I owe it to myself, not to abandon the charge I then undertook, till I see you safe with your relations at home. If, therefore, you are determined to leave my house, I shall myself accompany you to England.”

Gertrude pressed her hand to her throbbing brow, as if trying to collect her thoughts and calm her agitated feelings.

“Arthur,” she said, “I am not fit to reason with you to-night. My head aches intensely, and I feel utterly bewildered. To-morrow I shall be calmer. Good night.”

Oh, little did Arthur dream that this

was the last “good night” he should ever hear from those dear lips ; but in after times, the remembrance of it often thrilled upon his ear, and haunted his imagination. There was an unnatural calm—a forced composure in the manner in which she uttered those words, which could not have failed to strike him, had not his thoughts been deeply pre-occupied. He knew her in her weakness—the weakness of a fond and yielding woman’s heart ; but as yet he knew her not in her strength—the strength of high principles and a vigorous mind. The path of duty lay clearly defined before her, and she was not the less determined to pursue it, that it was a painful and a difficult path. She saw that it would be vain to argue with De Vere, while he was influenced far more by his passions than his judgment ; nor would

she expose herself any longer to the too fascinating eloquence of his voice and eye, lest it should deter her from the settled purpose of her soul.

When she bade him good night, she felt that she was bidding him an eternal farewell. She dared not trust herself to utter another word, but hastily disengaging her hand from his grasp, she hurried to her own room, and falling on her knees by her bedside, she burst into an uncontrollable flood of tears.

When she arose, she felt calmer and more composed, and having fully determined upon the course she should pursue, she wrote a few lines to Edith, intending to leave them on her table.

“DEAREST EDITH.—I can never forgive myself for having made you unhappy. It shall not be my fault if you

are so any longer. Farewell, and may Heaven's best blessings rest on you. If ever you think of Gertrude, let it be rather in sorrow than in anger ; for years of wretchedness await her, for every moment's grief she may have caused you. Once more, farewell."

The night was now far advanced, and Gertrude felt wearied and worn out by all the fatigue and excitement she had undergone ; but she dared not lie down to rest lest she should sleep too long. At the first dawn of sunrise she wrapped herself in her cloak, and with noiseless steps glided out of the house.

Even at that early hour some monks from a neighbouring convent were taking their morning ramble on the banks of the lake, and several peasants were preparing to convey their cart-loads of wine to the

Roman market. She passed on swiftly and eagerly till she reached the hotel, where having secured prompt attendance by dint of a handsome bribe, she was soon ensconced under the hood of a crazy, rickety vehicle, denominated a calessa, and jolting along the roughest of all the rough pavements that lead to the gates of the eternal city. Arrived within a few hundred yards of the Porta San Giovanni, she dismissed her vetturino, and proceeded on foot; by which means she contrived to enter, (amongst a group of peasants,) unobserved by the sentinels, who might otherwise have sent her back to Albano, in search of her passport. Towards the Trinità dei Monti she bent her steps, for there at least she was sure of finding one true and faithful friend—one whose heart would ever sympathize with hers, whether in joy or in sorrow.

The matin bell was ringing as she passed the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and an irresistible impulse seemed to lead her to enter it. How soothing to the wearied spirit is the sacred stillness, the sublime grandeur, of the magnificent temples of Rome! Gertrude felt it to be so, as she knelt on the pavement, with the worshippers who had assembled there, and poured forth her prayers to the same God for guidance and protection in this her hour of need.

With a lighter heart she then pursued her way, and having rung at the convent door, she was quickly admitted, with a kind welcome and smiling face, by the pretty little portress, who expressed some surprise on seeing her at such an unusual hour.

A very few minutes elapsed before she was clasped to the affectionate bosom

of her dear Angelique, to whom she confided unreservedly the sad tale of all her griefs and perplexities, and concluded by imploring her to exert all her influence with the Superieure, to permit her to take refuge in the convent, till she could make some arrangement for her future plans.

This was easily settled. When the urgency of the case was explained to that amiable and benevolent lady, she hesitated not to admit Gertrude as a pensionnaire, upon her promising to comply with all the outward forms of the religion of the community.

She scrupled not to enter into this engagement, for her heart had long leaned towards the religion of her mother, and the silent but powerful influence of her beloved friend's example had made a deep and indelible impression on her mind.

Her religious education had been very defective,—consisting of little more than a daily chapter in the Bible, hurried over in the school-room as a sort of necessary prelude to the business of the day, with a due proportion of sermons and catechisms on Sunday. It had always been to her the most irksome and uninteresting of all her studies ; there was a heartlessness in it which wearied and disgusted her from a child, and the only ideas she had ever formed of sincere and genuine piety, were derived from the conversation and example of Angelique ; who, as a good catholic, was of course anxious to instil into the mind of her favourite pupil the principles of what she considered the only true faith.

It was therefore with a mind strongly biassed in favour of the Roman-catholic religion, and wholly destitute of any practical instruction in the principles of

the reformed faith, that Gertrude became an inmate of the convent of the Sacre Cœur, where everything combined to strengthen her early prejudices, and to determine her finally to make a public profession of catholicism.

CHAPTER XV.

“Wanderer, come to me;
Why didst thou ever leave me? Know'st thou all
I could have borne, and called it joy to bear,
For thy sake! Know'st thou, that thy voice had power
To shake me with a thrill of happiness
By one kind tone? to fill mine eyes with tears
Of yearning love. And thou! oh, thou didst throw
That crushed affection back upon my heart;
Yet come to me—it died not!” F. HEMANS.

“Chercheriez vous encore ce qu'on appelle le bonheur?
Ah! trouverez vous mieux que ma tendresse!”

HARDLY an hour had elapsed after Gertrude's departure from Albano, when Edith was carried home by some peasants, who had found her lying on the grass,

near the lake, in an apparently lifeless state.

Medical assistance was instantly summoned; and it happened most fortunately, that an English physician, of some eminence was spending the summer in that neighbourhood. But what were Arthur's feelings, while, awaiting his arrival, he hung over the fair form of his young bride, now cold and stiff as marble; as he gazed on those pale and hollow cheeks, once so bright and blooming; as he remembered her in all the radiance of youth and beauty, a few short months ago, and beheld her now—the wreck his broken vows had made her! He knelt by her side, and clasped in his the small, soft hand that had always so fondly returned his pressure,—and a cold shiver ran through his veins, as he started from its icy touch!

Long and perseveringly was the skill of the physician exerted in vain, before any signs of returning animation were perceptible ; and, in an agony of mind which no words could describe, De Vere paced the room with hurried steps, during this period of intolerable suspense. And when at length she was roused from her long, deep sleep, the wild ravings of delirium succeeded to that death-like stillness—and the raging fires of fever to the cold chill of the grave.

Patiently and unweariedly did Arthur watch by her bedside, through many a dreary day, and many a sleepless night ; and often did the unconscious sufferer wound him to the very quick by her incoherent ravings, in which his name and Gertrude's were always blended together, with passionate entreaties that he would not abandon his own Edith. And some-

times she would fancy herself again amid the scenes of her childhood, and fondly recur to the happy hours they had spent together, when sorrow was a word of which they knew not the meaning.

* * * *

Days and weeks passed slowly and heavily away, ere Edith was sufficiently convalescent to be removed to Rome—a step which her physician considered absolutely essential to her recovery, as nothing could possibly have a worse effect upon her mind, than to be surrounded by scenes and associations of so exquisitely painful a nature as those of Albano must necessarily be.

Her first sign of returning consciousness was to take Arthur's hand in hers, saying, "Dearest, you will not leave me, will you? I have had a terrible dream;

oh, I cannot bear to think of it! But I am happy now, because you are near me. Oh, stay near me always, and let me rest my head upon your arm, and then I shall be so happy, so very happy."

She never mentioned Gertrude; and Arthur carefully put away everything that could recall her to her thoughts, for he dreaded to hear her speak that name. But he was mistaken in supposing that Edith thought not of Gertrude because she never spoke of her. She thought of her much and deeply, but forbore to inquire for her, lest it should distress Arthur; for full well she knew that he could now be no stranger to the cause of all her sufferings.

Upon her first removal to Rome, the change of air and scene appeared to revive her wonderfully: she even ven-

tured sometimes to bask in the bright sunshine on the Pincio, and leaning on Arthur's arm, she would slowly saunter through the sheltered alleys of the Villa Medici.

But consumption had fixed its deadly fangs on her delicate frame, and the brilliant hue which sometimes lighted up her faded cheek, and which Arthur fondly hailed as a token of returning health, was but the hectic flush of disease—the rose that decks the grave.

“ Can this be death ? there's bloom upon her cheek ;
But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic, like the unnatural red
Which autumn plants upon the perished leaf.”

Alas ! it was even so ; her days were numbered, and few and brief were the hours she had yet to spend on earth. She knew that she was dying, but would not undeceive her husband, for

she could not bear to witness his grief; she knew too how bitter must be his self-reproaches, and her chief anxiety was to convince him of her unalterable affection, her perfect confidence in his love.

CHAPTER XVI.

“All farewells should be sudden when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.”

SARDANAPALUS.

MANY weeks had elapsed since Gertrude became an inmate of the convent, and during all this time no tidings had reached her from Albano. She felt at first surprised, and then hurt by this proof of indifference; for it was but natural to suppose that De Vere would try to discover her retreat, and no one would be more likely to satisfy him on this

point than her friend Angelique. At length, unable to endure any longer this state of suspense and uncertainty, and yet shrinking from the bare idea of thrusting herself upon the recollection of those who seemed so willing to forget her, she adopted the expedient of sending a trusty envoy to Albano, charged with a message to Edith's maid, the ostensible purport of which was to inquire for some things she had left behind. She hoped by this means to hear at any rate if De Vere was still there ; for she thought it possible, barely possible, that he might have fulfilled his avowed intention of following her, on discovering that she had left his house.

But whither could he have attempted to pursue her ? Surely not to England, for he could hardly suppose she would have had the courage to undertake such

a journey alone ;—not to Naples, for among all her gay acquaintance there, she had not one friend.

Amid these doubts and surmises, the day wore away, and her anxiously expected messenger arrived at last. With trembling steps she hastened to the parlour to meet him, fondly hoping that he might be the bearer of one line at least, to tell her she was not yet wholly obliterated from the memory of those whom she had loved, ay, and still loved, better than all the world beside. But no such solace awaited her ; not one little line, no, not even a message relieved that overwhelming sense of utter desolation that weighed down her soul. All the information her messenger could bring her was that the Signora was ill, very ill—not likely to recover ; and, added he, “ the Cameriera charged me to tell you, Signo-

rina, that her lady is dying of a broken heart."

Full well did Gertrude understand the meaning of those few dreadful words ; full well did she feel what they were intended to convey, "She is dying, and you are her murderer !" Oh the agony of that terrible moment ! the slow-consuming torture of the weary hours that followed it ! Fain would she have flown to Albano that very evening, and would have esteemed it her highest privilege to be permitted to watch by night and by day near the couch of her dying friend. But no ; she felt that she had forfeited all claim to such a privilege ; she felt that her presence might be deemed an intrusion, nay, even an outrage at such a moment—that the very sound of her voice might disturb the last hours of the sufferer !

“ Oh ! if I could see her but for one instant ! ” she cried ; “ if I might but kneel at her feet and implore her forgiveness ! but no, even that consolation is denied me ! ”

It was well for Gertrude that the Superieure would not hear of her leaving the convent even for an hour ; for in her excited and distracted state of mind she was wholly incapable of acting for herself, and it required all the tenderness and sympathy of the affectionate Angelique to restore her to any tolerable degree of composure.

* * * *

One evening, not long after her return to Rome, Edith was lying on the sofa in the dim twilight, her head resting on Arthur's shoulder, and her hand clasped in his. “ There is one thing, dearest, ” she said, “ which weighs heavily on my mind, and I cannot rest till I have spoken

to you about it. I scarcely know why, but I have had a foolish dread of entering upon this subject, though it is continually uppermost in my thoughts. Will you forgive me for this want of confidence?" she added, with one of her own sweet smiles.

Arthur's only answer was to imprint a kiss on her fair forehead.

"Tell me, then," she continued, "what is become of Gertrude? do you know if she ever received a note I had written to her on that evening?"

"She did, my love, and you shall see her answer if you wish it."

"Poor, dear Gertrude!" exclaimed Edith, when she had read it; "is she indeed so very unhappy?"

"I can tell you nothing more," replied Arthur; "I have not seen her or heard from her since that evening."

"But have you no idea where she is

gone? I should like to see her once more before I die?"

"My own love, do not talk so strangely. You are getting better every day. I expect soon to see you mounted on Bianco, and flying across the Campagna."

Edith smiled mournfully; but she felt that it would be cruel to dispel the illusion, and she made no reply.

Some days after this conversation, Edith received a few lines from Gertrude, earnestly entreating permission to see her, if only for a few moments; and adding a particular request that she might find her quite alone. She shewed the note to De Vere, who well knew how to appreciate the feelings that had dictated it. He named an hour at which he would take care to be absent from home, and at that hour Gertrude set out, with faltering steps and a beating heart, but resolved to nerve herself for the trying interview.

Edith was reclining on a sofa, and supported by pillows. She held out her hand to her friend as she entered, and said, in her usual affectionate manner, "Dearest Gertrude, how long it is since we have met."

Gertrude could not speak, for her heart was bursting; she threw herself on her knees by the side of Edith's couch, and taking her hand she bathed it with tears.

"Do not weep so, dearest, or you will make me miserable," exclaimed Edith; and, in spite of herself, she mingled her tears with Gertrude's.

"Oh, Edith, can you, will you forgive me? You know not, and God grant you never may know, the half of what I have suffered. You would pity me if you did, indeed you would, though I deserve that you should hate me."

"Hate you, Gertrude! How can you talk so? Have you not been the dearest

and earliest friend of my childhood, and can I ever be so ungrateful as to forget all your kindness to me in those happy days? Is the sun never to shine again, because a cloud passes over it and obscures its brightness for a time? Nay, dearest, this is indeed unkind. It is as if you doubted my affection for you. Let us forget the last few months, and think only of the years that preceded them."

"Oh, Edith, you are too good—too generous. You may forgive me, but never can I forgive myself—never can I know another moment's happiness on this side the grave."

"Do not say so ; I trust there are yet many happy years in store for you. Gertrude, I speak in all sincerity and earnestness. Listen to me : I know I have not long to live—I feel it here," she

said, taking Gertrude's hand, and pressing it to her heart; "I feel that its throbbings and achings will soon be hushed, and at rest for ever. I shall not long be an obstacle to your happiness. You were made for each other—alas! how keenly have I felt that it was so! God grant you may make him happier than I have done; but you cannot, no, you cannot possibly love him better."

"Oh, Edith, how little do you know me, that you can talk to me in this way! Your bitterest reproaches were kindness compared with such cruel taunts as these. I marry Arthur de Vere!—I, the murderer of his wife! Oh, horrible, dreadful thought! My very soul recoils from it! I came here to humble myself at your feet, Edith—to implore your forgiveness—but not to be insulted! Alas! what right have I to complain, miserable

wretch that I am. I deserve it all—and I must bear it all! Yet hear me, Edith—one word more before we part. My resolution is unalterably fixed. A few months more, and my destiny is sealed. I bid adieu to the world for ever.”

“How, Gertrude! What do you mean?”

“I mean simply this,—that being henceforth an isolated being on the face of the earth, with nothing to love—nothing to live for—I shall renounce a world in which I can hope to find neither pleasure nor consolation; and in the solitude of a convent I shall seek the only boon that may yet be vouchsafed me—peace of mind, and a hope beyond the grave. And now, Edith, farewell. Think of me as of one who loves you fondly and faithfully, and who lives henceforth but to pray for your happiness.”

“ Oh, Gertrude, this must not be ! You were made for a far brighter destiny than the solitude and gloom of a cloister. I have long thought that you would sooner or later adopt the religion of your mother, and it is not for me to attempt to dissuade you from it,—that must rest between your conscience and yourself. But oh, let me entreat you, for my sake, for the sake of our early friendship, not to venture rashly upon such an irrevocable step. With your high spirits—your brilliant talents—your energetic mind—how could you endure the dulness and monotony of a convent ? Its very sameness and wearisomeness would drive you to distraction.”

“ Talk not of my high spirits, Edith. They are gone—gone for ever ! The spring-time of my life is blighted, and the withering chill of a premature old age

even now creeps over me. The gnawing worm of a reproachful conscience preys upon my heart, and consumes me with its slow but undying torture. I have caused the misery of those whom I loved best on earth. I have killed her whom I would have died to save ! Oh, Edith, Edith—when I see you stretched upon that couch, wasted to a skeleton—those sunken eyes—those hollow cheeks—that deep and painful cough, sounding like a death-knell in my ear ; when I see all this, and think that *I* have done it, could I ever dream of happiness again ? Will a life of severest mortification and bitterest remorse suffice to avenge your sufferings ? Oh, Edith, speak to me ; say once more that you forgive me, though it cannot lighten my load of misery.”

“ Dearest Gertrude, you know not how you distress me. If I have a wish that my life might be spared, it is that I

might prove to you the undiminished warmth of my affection. But I am too weak to bear this agitation. Put your hand here on my forehead—does it not scorch you? You must leave me, dearest, for to-day—but let me first fasten this bracelet on your arm. It will remind you of me, for you know I have always worn it, and if it should be——if we never meet again, you will value it as my last gift.”

“ If we never meet again ! Oh, Edith, I cannot part from you thus ! We must meet again. Will you not let me come to you once more ? ”

Edith answered not. The excitement was too much for her—she had fainted away.

* * * *

They were spared the pain of parting, for they saw each other no more.

From that time Edith continued to sink

rapidly from day to day ; and her medical attendant having declared that the least agitation might prove fatal to her, De Vere was obliged to refuse all Gertrude's earnest entreaties to be allowed another interview.

This period of painful suspense, which could only be followed by a still more agonizing certainty, was passed by Gertrude in the strictest seclusion. Even the society of Angelique had become distasteful to her, for she could not comprehend or enter into the bitterness of her remorse, the violence of her self-upbraidings.

Angelique was perfectly at a loss to account for such deep distress, such overwhelming grief ; and her delight at Gertrude's profession of (what she considered) the only true faith was so unbounded, that she felt little disposed to

regret any sufferings, however severe, that could lead to such a happy result.

There is a wretchedness to which even the tenderest sympathy can bring no relief ; and Gertrude preferred cherishing her grief in the solitude of her own cell to any solace that the voice of friendship could afford.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Non come fiamma che per forza è spenta
Ma che per se medesima si consume,
Se n'andò in pace, l'anima contenta ;
A guisa d'un soave e chiaro lume
Cui nutrimento, a poco a poco manca,
Tenendo al fin, il suo usato costume.
Pallida, no,—ma più che neve bianca,
Che senza vento, in un bel colle fiocche,
Parea posar, come persona stanca
Quasi un dolce dormir nei suoi begli occhi
Sendo lo spirto, già da lei diviso,
Era quel, che morir, chiaman gli sciocchi ;
Morte, bella parea, nel suo bel viso.”

PETRARCA.

It was one of those bright, sunny December days which in Italy often gild the waning glories of the departing year, making it sink to rest amid sunshine and flowers, and giving promise of still brighter days to come.

Edith had desired to have her couch drawn towards the window, and the bright beams of the setting sun lighted up her soft blue eye, making it glisten with unwonted brilliancy, and lingered amid the golden ringlets that shaded her sunken cheeks. A sweet smile gladdened her countenance as she held out her hand to Arthur, who had gone out in quest of some flowers for which she had expressed a wish, and was now returning with a handful of violets and china roses—the last lingerers in the deserted garden—the first heralds of returning spring.

“Dearest, how very kind you are to take so much trouble for me,” she said. “But I am very glad you are come back, for I was afraid——I fancied I might never see you again.”

“Oh, Edith, my best beloved, do not talk so fearfully, or you will break my

heart. I cannot bear to think of parting from you, indeed I cannot.”

“ Arthur, my dying prayer for you will assuredly be heard. You will not be left comfortless when I am gone. You will be enabled to look beyond the grave, and to realize the bright hope of a future reunion, in that blest abode where there shall be no more tears, no more partings. But you must first learn to say from your inmost soul, ‘ Father, not my will, but thine be done.’ ”

“ My own darling, to see you fading away in the spring-time of life, were alone sufficiently hard to bear ; but to think that it is I who have destroyed you—that I am your murderer—I, who would gladly die a thousand deaths to save your precious life ! Oh, that thought is madness ! ”

“ Hush, Arthur, hush ; you distract me by these self-reproaches. Am I not in the hands of God ? How then dare you say that it is you who have shortened my days ? And, oh, if you could but know how happy I am, how glad to leave this sorrowful world, you would envy rather than pity me ! Peace, peace—all is peace within ! Keep these flowers for my sake ; they will remind you of me when I am gone. They too must fade soon, but I feel that I shall die first,—my little strength is fast failing me. If I could have chosen for myself, I would have asked no better than to die in the golden light of that glorious sunset. It cheers my fainting spirit with a promise of that far more glorious light which I shall soon behold—the light of my Saviour’s countenance. Nay, weep not, dearest. Why should

you cast a gloom over the last moments we may ever spend together? Why try to draw my soul back to earth? I would fain have done with it for ever, with all its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears; for what are they now to me? My poor, poor mother, how she will grieve over her lost child! How fondly she loved me! oh, too fondly! Arthur, will you make up to her for my loss? Will you be to her, for my sake, all that I would have been?"

Arthur could not answer, for his heart was well nigh bursting; and she fell back on her pillow, overcome with exhaustion.

The sun was fast sinking behind Monte Mario, whose tall cypresses reared their gloomy pyramids against a sky of burnished gold. The dome of St. Peter's rose darkly in front, and all around was "one unclouded blaze of living light!"

Edith opened her eyes once more, and gazed steadfastly on that glorious scene, which seemed to animate her departing spirit with a foretaste of heaven. Full well she knew that setting sun would rise for her no more ; but a bright smile lighted up her faded features, and her mild eye beamed with hope, even a hope full of immortality. She faintly pressed the hand that with a convulsive grasp held hers, and pointing upwards, she softly murmured, “ God bless you, dearest ! meet me there.”

Her eyes closed ;—one deep-drawn sigh, and her gentle spirit burst its bonds, and winged its flight to heaven.

“ And there she lay, like some fair sculptured form,
Lovely, and pure, and pale, and motionless.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Thy daughter's dead !
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam ;
The star hath set that shone on Helle's stream ;
Hark ! to the hurried question of despair,
' Where is my child ?' an echo answers ' Where ?' ”
BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

LORD ANNANDALE was so shocked by the striking alteration in Edith's appearance when he saw her at Albano, that he thought it his duty to lose no time in communicating his fears to Lady Fitzgerald ; though, afraid of alarming her too much, he said less than he felt on the subject. The anxious mother immediately wrote to Edith, entreating her to

tell her if she felt ill, and offering, much as she disliked travelling, to set out for Italy directly, if she could be of any use to her.

There was nothing Edith more dreaded than the presence of her mother under existing circumstances ; more, indeed, on Arthur's account than her own, for she was well aware that it would be no easy task for one so little versed as herself in the art of deceiving, to conceal from her mother's scrutinizing eye the painful history of the past. She therefore worded her reply so carefully as to soothe for a time her mother's well-grounded fears ; merely saying that she was suffering from incautious exposure to the night air, but that she already felt better for the mild and balmy atmosphere of Rome.

Lord Annandale's anxious interest in

Edith's welfare would not suffer him to remain long in uncertainty, and soon after his arrival at Vienna, he wrote a letter of inquiry to the physician who attended her, entreating to be candidly informed of her real state. The reply contained an ample confirmation of his worst fears ; and painfully difficult as was the task, he hesitated not a moment to write to Lady Fitzgerald, and communicate to her, as delicately and gently as he could, the heart-rending intelligence he had received.

The agony of the soul-stricken mother is not to be described. She travelled day and night ; she never closed her throbbing eyelids, she scarcely tasted food, till she reached the gates of Rome. Well might it have been inscribed for her over those gloomy portals, “ *Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che entrate.* ”

On arriving at the hotel she demanded a guide, and without a moment's delay she proceeded on foot, as if animated for the time with supernatural strength, towards the abode of her daughter.

The door was opened by a foreign servant, who did not recognise her. She asked no questions, but rushed on, with the madness of despair, towards a room to which she was attracted by the glare of many lights. Vain were all efforts to detain her; with the strength of a maniac she sprang forward, and uttering a piercing shriek, fell senseless upon the coffin of her child !

That child from whom she had parted but one short year before, a happy blooming bride, now lay at her feet, a pale cold corpse ; the wedding-dress exchanged for the shroud ; the bridal-veil for the funeral-pall !

For some time the bereaved mother seemed to hover on the brink of the grave, and her life was almost despaired of. Oh, happy had it been for her could she have shared her Edith's last cold resting-place, and have been spared the agony of returning consciousness, the dreadful hour of awaking from that terrible dream to the still more terrible reality.

And there she was, all alone in a strange land, without one friend to whisper comfort to her bleeding heart, without one support on which to lean in the hour of failing strength. But she could not be persuaded to return to England. "I cannot leave my child," she would say; "where she lies, I must lie too. It cannot last much longer; I shall soon follow her."

Day after day she dragged her feeble

steps to the grave of her lost treasure, and watered with her tears the roses and myrtle with which she had fondly decked it. Like the afflicted Hebrew mother, she refused to be comforted. The idol of her soul was taken from her ; her every hope was blasted, her every feeling withered ; and the heart that will not bend must break.

* * * *

Some time after, when Edith and her early grave were alike forgotten, or remembered only by the faithful few, a stranger, whose wandering steps had led him to the gate of the little protestant cemetery, was attracted by the sight of a figure in deep mourning lying prostrate upon the earth in a remote corner, which was almost concealed by the projecting tomb of Caius Cestius. On inquiring of a woman who was passing by with a

merry troop of laughing children around her, he was told that it was “*La madre Inglese, poverina, che piange sulla tomba della fanciulla.*”

The gate of the little cemetery was locked, but he succeeded in getting it opened ; and after waiting and watching for some time in vain, he at last gently approached the mourner, but still she moved not. He then ventured to raise her from the ground. It was too late ! The spirit had fled, and the broken-hearted mother had rejoined her child, in those blest regions where sorrow and parting are no more.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ ’Twas too much wretchedness : the convent cell,
There might the maiden with her misery dwell,
And that, to-morrow was her chosen doom,
There might her hopes, her feelings find a tomb.
Her feelings !—no,—pray, struggle, weep, condemn ;
Her feelings !—there was but one grave for them.”

L. E. L.

“ My soul nor deigns, nor dares complain,
Though grief and passion there rebel ;
I only know we loved in vain ;
I only feel—farewell—farewell !”—BYRON.

ON the same day that Edith was consigned to the grave, Arthur disappeared from Rome. No one knew whither he was gone, or what was become of him. It was the opinion of most people that

excessive grief had impaired his reason ; and some few there were who darkly hinted that he had probably put an end at once to his sorrows and his life.

But was it strange that he should recoil from the scene of so much misery ? Was it strange that with the feverish restlessness of a powerful mind struggling with agony and remorse, he should fly he recked not whither, so that he could but fly from himself ?

Some weeks had elapsed, and still nothing had been heard of the wanderer, when Gertrude received a letter (dated from some obscure village in the Abruzzi,) in which he earnestly entreated her to grant him an interview, if only for a few moments. She refused his request. Indeed, how could she do otherwise ? She was about to enter into a solemn and irrevocable engagement—to make a

public confession of her faith, and devote herself henceforth soul and body to the service of her Creator. Could she then, in the midst of such high and sacred vocations, suffer her mind to be distracted, and her heart lacerated, by the conflicting emotions which an interview with De Vere could not fail to call forth? If even in absence his image was continually intervening as a dark cloud between her affections and her vows, how could she remain faithful to the settled purpose of her soul, were she to listen to the fond and earnest entreaties with which he would too certainly try to dissuade her from that irremediable step?

All the natural firmness of her mind, the native soundness of her judgment, which had for a time been overpowered by the omnipotent spell of a master-passion which engrossed her whole soul,

now resumed their wonted empire over her, and enabled her to resist the fond pleadings of her weak woman's heart.

For many reasons she determined against choosing for her final retreat the convent of the Sacre Cœur. The number of pupils who are educated there would prevent her enjoying that perfect stillness and repose which she felt to be so essential to her agitated mind ; and the custom which prevails there, of passing through a novitiate of seven years before the black veil is irrevocably assumed, would expose her firmness and constancy to a greater trial than she felt it right to submit to.

After much consultation with her spiritual director, the Abbate F——, she finally determined to enter the convent of the barefooted Carmelites, the most rigid and austere order now existing. It was

not by the advice of the Abbate that she came to this decision. On the contrary, he rather endeavoured to dissuade her from condemning herself to a life of such discipline and severity, and urged her to become a member of some less rigorous order. He even hinted that he thought it probable her health would soon sink beneath such austerities, and that she would fall a victim to her self-imposed penalty. But she remained inflexible on this point, and shortly after, at her confirmation, she assumed the name of her chosen patroness Santa Teresa, whose humble and self-denying follower she resolved henceforth to become.* It was about two months after Edith's death that she bade

* It is customary on taking the veil to assume the name of some saint, under whose especial patronage and protection the novice thereby places herself. This name always supersedes the one which was given in baptism.

adieu to her kind friends of the *Sacre Cœur*, and took up her abode within those walls which were to be to her the grave of youth, and hope, and joy—an impassable barrier between herself and all she yet loved on earth.

Not till the day had been positively fixed upon which she was to take the veil, did she consent to see De Vere once more, in order to bid him farewell for ever. As a special favour, she obtained permission that this final interview should take place without a witness ; which, though contrary to the rules of the convent, could hardly be refused under the peculiar circumstances of the case.

She was on her knees in the solitude of her lonely cell, seeking support and succour from on high, to enable her to go through this much-dreaded trial, when

the portress came to inform her that a stranger was waiting to see her in the parloir. Her trembling limbs could scarcely sustain her as she descended the stone staircase, and traversed the long range of gloomy corridors through which she had to pass. When she approached the door of the parloir, she stopped a moment, and leaning against the wall for support, she covered her face with her hands, and again breathed a silent prayer for firmness and composure in this most agonizing hour that yet awaited her.

As she entered the room, De Vere gazed wistfully at her, and for a moment he seemed scarcely to believe that it was really Gertrude who stood before him. Well might he doubt! She from whom he had parted but a few months before in all the radiance of health and beauty,

was now pale, and wan, and emaciated. The dark eye whose lightning flash had been subdued and softened for him alone, was now dimmed and faded ; its sun had set in tears. The light elastic step, the commanding yet winning air, the voice whose simplest tone was music, where are they now ? Ah, where ! Can this indeed be the wreck of what once was Gertrude ?

She was dressed in deep mourning, and wrapped in a large black cloak, with the hood drawn close over her head, for she was not yet inured to the cold and chilling atmosphere of the convent.

“ Arthur, have you then so soon forgotten me ? ” she exclaimed.

Altered as was that voice, it still found an echo in his inmost soul. He darted forwards and caught her in his arms. Oh ! what a moment was that for both

those fond hearts ! a moment in which the ecstasy of meeting again after that long and terrible separation was fearfully blended with the untold agony of a last, an eternal farewell.

With all the fervency and eloquence of passion mingled with despair did Arthur implore her to abjure her dreadful project, and to live yet for his sake.

“ Have we not already suffered enough,” he urged, “ that you are bent upon prolonging our mutual misery, till death, more merciful than you, interposes to release us ? Will nothing less satisfy you than that we should drink the cup of wretchedness even to the very dregs ? Oh ! Gertrude, how can I believe that you ever loved me, when I see you thus voluntarily forsake me for ever—when I hear you thus coldly and unflinchingly condemn me to utter, hopeless, endless

misery, when by a word, a look, you might make me supremely blest? Is it pride, is it fear of the world's dread sneer that makes you persist in this fatal determination?"

"No, Arthur, I sacrificed all my pride when I stooped to love one who was wedded to another. I braved the opinion of the world when, like a guilty thing, I fled from the protection of your roof; but not even for your sake can I submit to endure the undying sting of a remorseful conscience, or the degrading humiliation of self-contempt!"

They parted, as the dying part from earth and all they love! One last embrace, and yet another look, and then farewell, re-echoed for the hundredth time, yet lingering still, and dreading to depart.

But hark! the sound of intrusive foot-

steps warn him to be gone. The chapel bell is tolling ; they are come to summon her to the Ave Maria. Again he madly clasps her to his heart, and presses his lips to that pale marble brow ; then rushing out of the room with the reckless impetuosity of despair, he stopped not to turn or to breathe till he found himself upon the banks of the Tiber, on that very spot where they had first confessed their love, not indeed in words, but in that mute confession of the eye, whose silent eloquence often speaks what the faltering lips refuse to utter.

CHAPTER XX.

“ From henceforth know
I am devoted unto God alone,
And take my refuge in the cloister.”

MARINO FALIERO.

THE morning that was to witness the consummation of the sacrifice rose bright and cloudless, as if in cruel mockery of the victim who fled from its brightness in very bitterness of spirit, and vainly thought to find a refuge from the undying pangs of remorse, in the gloom and solitude of a convent's cell. Crowds of curious gazers thronged to the church

of the Carmelites, to witness what to them was nothing more than an idle ceremony—a pantomime to be performed solely for their amusement. Little they recked, that heartless multitude, of her who was to enact the chief part in that solemn pageant ! No thought had they for the broken spirit that was to be immured in that living tomb !

But there was one amid that careless throng who seemed to have nothing in common with the light hearts and smiling faces around him. His tall commanding figure enveloped in the ample folds of a large Spanish cloak—he stood half concealed behind a pillar in a dark recess, as if anxious, above all things, to escape observation. There he stood, breathless and motionless as a statue ; his eyes rivetted on the altar with a gaze

so fixed, so piercing, that few could have borne it unshrinkingly.

With considerable difficulty the Swiss Guards cleared a path through that dense crowd for his Eminence Cardinal ——, who, followed by an imposing train of attendants in full dress, walked up the centre of the church, and took his seat on the left side of the altar. But little was this pompous procession heeded, for all eyes were intently fixed upon the Sposa, the heroine of the day, who, leaning upon the arm of the Marchesa D——, (the lady officiating as her godmother on this occasion,) passed through the throng as though she saw them not, till she reached her appointed seat on the right hand of the altar.

Contrary to the usual custom on such occasions, when the unhappy victim is decked out in jewels and finery, as if to

make the most of her last exhibition, Teresa appeared simply attired in a plain white dress, with a wreath of orange blossoms on her head—the very same wreath that Edith had worn on her bridal day. Her raven tresses braided over her marbled brow relieved its deadly paleness. Her dark eye had lost its brilliancy; its light had been quenched in tears. That wasted and emaciated form bore witness to days and nights of long vigils and protracted fasts—those self-inflicted pains wherewith the tortured body vainly seeks to relieve the burdened spirit of its intolerable weight of woe!

Her steps were faltering, and her limbs trembled from bodily weakness, but no signs of agitation were visible on her countenance, and her features, usually so animated, so beaming with expression, were now calm and rigid as if fixed in

death. Her eyes were bent upon the ground, and completely veiled by their long dark lashes, as if to avoid the intrusive gaze of the multitude.

The ceremony began with a long and very eloquent address from the Cardinal, well calculated to excite the feelings and work upon the imagination of his audience.

“ Oh giovine beata, oh donna fortunata,” were the titles by which he addressed the sposa, congratulating her on being rescued from the dark benighted island of her birth, and elected by God to the glorious destiny of a bride of Christ! In conclusion, he told her that she would, doubtless, be the chosen instrument of Heaven to convert many of her countrymen to the true faith, by her unceasing prayers and bright example.

He then made a sign to her to kneel down before the altar, where she made a public profession of her choice, repeating the words after the Cardinal, but in so low a voice as to be scarcely audible. He afterwards presented her with a large crucifix, which she took in her arms and fervently pressed to her lips. Then, and then only, did she lift her eyes from the ground, and raise them to Heaven with a subdued yet ardent gaze, in which a gleam of faith seemed to triumph for a moment over the ravages of grief and remorse.

And thus ended the public part of the ceremony. The Cardinal led her back through the church, on whose threshold she bade adieu for ever to the world ; but that thought caused her no pain, for the bitterness of death was past. When she had taken her last look at him who

was all the world to her, she felt that grief had done its worst—that she had drunk her cup of woe even to the very dregs ! And when the iron door of the convent closed upon her, with a deep and sullen sound that reverberated through the long dark line of vaulted cloisters, she shuddered not to think that her doom was sealed, but rather rejoiced in the consummation of the sacrifice !

There, in a small stone cell, surrounded by all the sisterhood, their faces covered with thick black veils, her white dress was taken off by a lady who acted as bridesmaid at this mournful bridal ; her luxuriant tresses were cut close to her head, and she was clothed in the coarse brown woollen garb of the order to which she now belonged. She was then laid prostrate on the ground, upon her face, with her arms stretched out, and

the nuns, each holding a small wax taper, chanted the funeral service over her in a monotonous dirge-like strain,—strewing her with roses and violets, and such other flowers as the convent-garden afforded—a garden which was rarely gladdened by the blessed sunshine.

On rising from the ground she was embraced by all the sisterhood, and on her head was placed the silver crown always worn by the sposa on the day of her bridal. Alas ! how many a fair young brow has throbbed beneath the weight of that fatal coronet ! to how many has it proved a crown of thorns !

When the excitement of that agitating day was past, and Teresa found herself at night alone, in the solemn stillness of her cell, oh, what a relief was it to her o'erfraught heart to vent its bitterness ! By an effort of almost supernatural

strength, she had gone through that day's harrowing task, with a firmness and composure which the highly-wrought state of her feelings could alone have enabled her to maintain. But now that all was over—now that she might weep unseen, and pour forth her sorrows to Him who could alone speak peace to her troubled spirit, she threw herself upon her knees on the cold pavement of her cell, and wept, till she could weep no more, those bitter, scalding tears, wrung out from the inmost depths of the wounded heart, like torrents of liquid fire!

The small grated window was partly open, and the night air blew keenly upon her fevered frame, chilling but not refreshing it. Faint and exhausted with all she had undergone, she laid herself down upon her miserable pallet, in the

vain hope of finding repose. It was a narrow iron bedstead, so narrow that it was barely possible to turn round on it without danger of falling off. Add to this, that it was scarcely softer than the pavement beneath, that its only covering consisted of a pair of coarse brown woollen sheets and a thick rug, and it will hardly be wondered at if Teresa failed to find on such a couch the rest her wearied frame so much required.

Over the door of each cell there is an inscription, consisting of one word only, which is supposed to express the chief object or desire of the sister who has selected it for her motto ; such as *Preg-hiera*, *Carità*, *Mortificazione*. Over Teresa's door was inscribed the word "*Penitenza*."

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Quando fra l'ombre incerte
Sembra che il giorno mora,
Io dirò quest' è l'ora
Ch'ei piange e pensa a me.
Solo un romito albergo,
Sia caro al pianto mio
E il tempio ove con Dio,
Ragionerò di te.
Mientre nel ciel la luna
Regna con mesto lume,
Io lascierò le piume,
Al cenno del dolor.
Ove sarai? Dell'etra,
Qual parte vuoi ch'io miri?
Sappiano, i miei sospiri,
Dove gli chiama l'amor !”

NICCOLINI.

It is customary for the sposa to be permitted to receive behind a grating the

visits of her friends for seven days after her profession ; but Teresa refused to avail herself of this privilege, fearing lest it might involve her in another interview with De Vere—a trial which she felt she had not strength to undergo.

Great then was Arthur's disappointment, when day after day he repaired to the convent, and was invariably refused admittance.

As a last resource, he contrived to get a note conveyed to Teresa, imploring her, in the most heart-rending terms, not to deny him the only consolation that yet remained to him on earth.

“ I think I have a right to claim this indulgence,” he added, “ for having so scrupulously obeyed you hitherto, in abstaining from all attempts to see you during so many miserable months. But I was near you, Gertrude, on that fatal

morning—I was close to you, though you saw me not—I watched your every movement—I longed to detect a stifled sigh, an unbidden tear—anything that I might fondly construe into a memory of the past—a thought of him who adores you ! I could have flown to your rescue—I would have snatched you from the jaws of the tomb that was ready to engulf you—I would have saved you from the horrible fate that awaited you, and restored you to life and love !

“ Vain dreams ! Your very heart seemed turned to stone ; not a trace of human emotions remained ; not a vestige of what once was Gertrude could my aching eyes discern in that cold, inanimate form, those fixed and passionless features ! But oh, if you have not buried all feeling, all remembrance in that dreadful tomb, let me conjure you by the

memory of by-gone days to grant me this my earnest request—the last I shall ever make. I leave Rome to-morrow. It would goad me to madness to remain here. Wherever I turn, I am haunted by some agonizing remembrance—some vision of the lost, the dead! Gertrude, I must, I *will* see you once more. I cannot bear to think I have looked my last. I cannot bear that the last tones of your voice should for ever echo in my ears with the fearful sound of that terrible vow! In mercy spare me this!”

Could Arthur have felt the burning tears that scorched her pallid cheek as Teresa bent over his letter—could he have beheld the agony of her spirit, as upon her knees she implored strength to resist the temptation which was almost too powerful to be withstood, he would have been compelled to acknowledge

that, if all other emotions had been stifled in her breast, the power of intense suffering at least remained.

It was not now with her as in former days. The bitter experience of the past had taught her to lean on a higher power than her own ; it had shewn her that her own strength was perfect weakness, and that in the hour of trial they only are safe who seek support and guidance from above.

And she sought it not in vain ! The conflict was severe—the yearning heart pleaded powerfully for one more glance—one fond farewell—one brief gleam of light before her long dark night closed in. But no,—it might not be ! If even the sight of his hand-writing had power so deeply to affect her, how could she bear to hear the sound of that heart-thrilling voice—to meet the earnest gaze of that soul-subduing eye ?

“Oh, no ; the very thought were madness !” she groaned aloud. “Have I not dedicated myself to God? and dare I then be faithless to my awful vow? But I may write to him once more—that miserable consolation at least is not denied me.”

With a faltering hand she traced the following lines,—so tremulous with emotion, and blotted with tears, as to be scarcely legible to any but the quick eye of affection. In the envelope was enclosed a long, shining braid of raven hair, which had been cut off on the day of her profession; it was all she had now to give.

“Have pity on my weakness, and spare me the torture of refusing what my heart yearns to grant. Oh, Arthur, if you knew the agony of my soul at this moment—if you knew the sharp and cruel conflict this sacrifice has cost me—

you would not say that I have ceased to feel! Would that I were indeed dead to all feeling, for then should I be spared this unutterable weight of anguish! I must not, I dare not, see you again. It would be perjury to my solemn vows. Alas! have I not broken them already? Devoted as I am from henceforth to Heaven alone, I shudder to think that my heart, my affections, every thought and feeling of my soul is yours, and yours only! I fondly hoped that my rebellious spirit was chastened and subdued by the severe discipline it has undergone; but the tumult of contending emotions which your letter has awakened in my breast fearfully dispels the illusion. What then would become of me were I to trust myself to listen to your too persuasive voice—to meet the fond gaze of your eloquent eye?

“From the window of my cell I catch a glimpse of the heights of Albano, and can discern the dim outline of the woods, beneath whose shade we have wandered together. I gaze on them at evening, when bathed in the golden light of the setting sun, till the sufferings of the past and the misery of the present are alike forgotten, and I am again in fancy threading those mazy paths by your side, my arm linked in yours, and my ear drinking in the soft tones of your loved voice. Oh the fearful moment of awaking from such dreams as these !

“ Arthur, though seas and mountains will soon lie between us, we may still enjoy that sweet communion of spirit, of which nothing, no, not even death itself, can deprive us. The glorious hour of sunset shall be the link that still unites us, heart to heart, and soul to soul.

With our eyes fixed on the self-same object, our minds absorbed in the same contemplation, time and space will be annihilated, and we shall feel that the beloved one is still near. Oh, how I shall long for that hour! How the thought of it will support me through each joyless day!

“ Arthur, this must be my last farewell! All the fervour of an unfathomable, undying love, I pour into that word! Henceforth I live but to pray for you. I have but one hope—to meet you beyond the grave. Most precious has your love been to me—oh, far beyond aught else that earth could give,—the one bright spot in my dreary existence—the solitary star in my gloomy sky! A treasure not too dearly purchased by all the bitter agony of the past, the undying remorse of the future! In one long deep dream

of thee my days and nights will pass,
and when my spirit escapes from its
dark prison house, it will hover o'er thee
as thy guardian angel, and fondly cling
to thee in death as in life, in weal or woe.
Farewell, and yet once more farewell,
till we meet in heaven to part no more.
Arthur, if you love me meet me there.
If fervent ceaseless prayer can aught
avail, you must—you will. That hope
is all that now remains to your heart-
broken Gertrude—yes, Gertrude still to
you !”

* * * * *

SHE kneels in prayer :—a ray of sunset streams
Athwart the gloom, and casts a golden gleam
O'er the cold pavement of her lonely cell.
Her dark eye raised to Heaven in humble faith,
Her hands crossed on her breast in attitude
Of meek submission,—and her parted lips
Breathing his name whose image dwells enshrined
Within her heart of hearts. Oh ! faithful love,
Strong in its deep devotedness ! What though
Long weary years have passed since last they met,
And nought of him she knows, save that he *was* :
That memory is all she lives upon,

Her dream by night,—her one sole thought by day !
She lives but to pour forth for him alone
Fervent unceasing prayer—the prayer of faith,
Omnipotent with Heaven ! No mortal eye
Hath e'er beheld her weep,—no ear hath heard
A sigh escape her lips. Her griefs are known
To Him alone who binds the broken heart ;
Her chastened soul bows meekly to His will,
Trusts to His mercy as her only plea,
And reads her pardon there.

Amid the gloom
Of cloistered solitude, a ray of peace
From heaven, beams like that setting sun
Upon her soul,—and bids it not despond !
She feels her prayer is heard ! Her dark eye beams
With an unwonted lustre, as in days
Long past, ere yet its light was quenched in tears.
'Tis fixed in one long, ardent, rapturous gaze
Upon that glorious sky of burnished gold :—
Entranced she kneels, nor scarcely seems to breathe !

More like the pictured forms of Guido's bright
Creation than a thing of life !

'Tis past !

The vision's vanished ;—the last lingering ray
Of sunset sinks beneath the wave that bathes
The Ostian shore,—and the rapt spirit falls
To earth again ! But not in vain that glimpse
Beyond the tomb ! Oh, not in vain that pledge
Of brighter hours :—for oft when doubts and fears
Her drooping heart assail, that sunset gleam
To memory will recur with soothing power,
And chase each cloud away.

Supported thus,

With firmer step she treads her heavenward path,
Lonely, but not alone ! If aught of earth
Clings to her still, 'tis that deep-rooted passion
Which has outlived the wreck of all beside ;
Hallowed indeed and purified, but ne'er
To be subdued. Remorse and grief have done their
worst

T' efface his memory from that faithful shrine ;
It lives, it glows there still ! Like the pale lamp,
Before some altar burning day and night,
With faint but quenchless ray,—ever most bright
Amid the deepest gloom ! No other thought,
No other image dwells in that lone breast ;
Her only memory of the past—his love,
Her only hope—to meet again—in heaven !

CONCLUSION.

“ I loved her, and destroy’d her.”—MANFRED.

ONCE, and only once, in the course of the year, the sisterhood of the rigid order of Santa Teresa are permitted to breathe the open air, and gaze on the unknown world around them, from the roof of a high tower which surmounts the convent walls. This is called the Villeggiatura, this bright spot in their dreary existence, this solitary gleam of sunshine that gilds their cheerless path ; and great is the joy of the young nuns when this happy sea-

son approaches ; though alas ! to the imprisoned spirit this brief glimpse of liberty must be at the best a very doubtful enjoyment.

But there is one of that pale sisterhood to whom the Villeggiatura is a day of severer penance than any other throughout the livelong year. One side of the tower commands a view of the protestant burial-ground ; there she kneels, her arms crossed upon her bosom, fixed and motionless as marble. One who knows her history has attentively observed her for many years, and except on one occasion, when exhausted nature failed her, and she was carried down fainting to her cell, she has always remained kneeling in that painful posture, as if rooted to the spot, from the moment she ascended the tower till the vesper bell summoned her to evening prayers.

The unwonted sound of human voices disturbs not her death-like repose. The burning rays of the noonday sun scorch her pale cheek, but she feels it not. The cool breath of evening sweeps o'er her throbbing brow, but allays not its parching fever. Her eyes are fixed, in one long earnest gaze, on a low mound of turf,

“ O'er which the myrtle showers
Its leaves, by soft winds fanned.”

It is the grave of her friend,—alas ! her victim !

THE END.







